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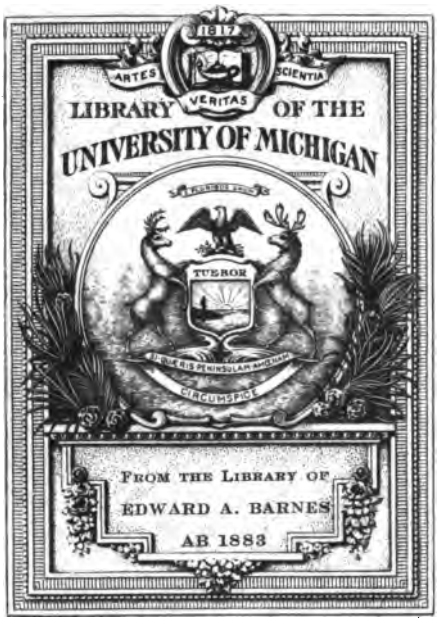

THE GIFT OF

MRS. BARNARD PIERCE
MRS. CARL HAESSLER
MRS. HOWARD LUCE
MISS MARGARET KNIGHT

827
Y71
1802

Young, Edward

THE

WORKS

OF THE

AUTHOR

OF

THE NIGHT-THOUGHTS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

REVISED AND CORRECTED BY HIMSELF.

VOL. III.

A NEW EDITION.

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1802.

NIGHT THE SEVENTH.

BEING THE

SECOND PART

OF THE

INFIDEL RECLAIMED.

CONTAINING

THE NATURE, PROOF, AND IMPORTANCE, OF IMMORTALITY.

Library of E. A. Barnes
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add. ed.

PREFACE.

As we are at war with the power, it were well if we were at war with the manners of *France*. A land of *levity*, is a land of *guilt*. A *serious mind* is the native soil of every virtue; and the single character that does true honour to mankind. The *soul's immortality* has been the favourite theme with the *serious* of all ages. Nor is it strange; it is a subject by far the most interesting, and important, that can enter the mind of man. Of highest moment this subject always *was*, and always *will be*. Yet this its highest moment seems to admit of *increase*, at this day; a sort of *occasional* importance is superadded to the *natural* weight of it; if that opinion which is advanced in the preface to the preceding *Night*, be just. It is there supposed, that all our *infidels*, whatever scheme, for argument's sake, and to keep themselves in countenance, they patronize, are betrayed into their deplorable error, by some doubts of their *immortality*, at the bottom. And the more I consider this point, the more I am persuaded of the truth of that opinion. Though the distrust of a *futurity* is a strange error; yet it is an error into which *bad* men may *naturally* be distressed. For it is impossible to bid defiance to final ruin, without some refuge in imagination, some presumption of escape. And what presumption is there? There are but two in nature; but two, within the compass of human thought. And these are,—That either GOD *will* not, or *can* not punish. Considering the divine attributes, the *first* is too gross to be di-

gested by our strongest wishes. And since *omnipotence* is as much a divine attribute as *holiness*, that GOD *cannot* punish, is as absurd a supposition as the former. GOD certainly can punish as long as wicked men exist In non-existence, therefore, is their only refuge; and, consequently, non-existence is their strongest wish. And strong wishes have a strange influence on our opinions; they bias the judgment in a manner, almost, incredible. And since on *this* member of their *alternative*, there are some very small *appearances* in their *favour*, and none at all on the *other*, they catch at this reed, they lay hold on this chimæra, to save themselves from the shock and horror of an *immediate* and *absolute* despair.

On reviewing my subject, by the light which *this* argument, and others of like tendency, threw upon it, I was more inclin'd than ever to pursue it, as it appear'd to me to strike directly at the main root of *all* our infidelity. In the following pages it is, accordingly pursu'd at large; and some arguments for immortality, new at least to me, are ventur'd on in them. There also the writer has made an attempt to set the gross absurdities and horrors of *annihilation* in a fuller and more affecting view, than is (I think) to be met with elsewhere.

The gentlemen, for whose sake this attempt was chiefly made, profess great admiration for the wisdom of heathen antiquity: What pity 'tis they are not sincere! If they were sincere, how would it mortify them to consider, with what contempt, and abhorrence, their notions would have been received by *those* whom they so much admire? What degree of contempt and abhorrence would fall to their share, may be conjectur'd by the following matter of fact (in my opinion) extremely memorable. Of all their heathen worthies, *Socrates*, ('tis well known) was the most guarded, dispassionate, and composed: Yet this great master of temper was angry; and angry at his last hour; and angry with his friends; and angry for what deserv'd acknowledgment; and for a right and tender instance of true

friendship towards him. Is not this surprising? What could be the cause? The cause was for his honour; It was a truly noble, tho', perhaps, a too punctilious, regard for *immortality:* For his friend asking him, with such an affectionate concern as became a friend, "Where he should deposit his remains?" It was resented by *Socrates*, as implying a dishonourable supposition, that he could be so mean, as to have a regard for any thing, even in himself that was *not* IMMORTAL.

This fact well considered, would make our infidels withdraw their admiration from *Socrates;* or make them endeavour, by their imitation of this illustrious example, to share his glory: And, consequently, it would incline them to peruse the following pages with candour and impartiality: Which is all I desire; and that, for *their* sakes: For I am persuaded, that an unprejudiced infidel must, necessarily, receive some advantageous impressions from them.

July 7, 1744.

CONTENTS

OF THE SEVENTH NIGHT.

In the Sixth Night arguments were drawn, from NATURE, in proof of *immortality: Here,* others are drawn from MAN: From his *Discontent,*—from his *Passions* and *Powers*—from the gradual growth of *Reason,*—from his fear of *Death*—from the nature of *Hope,* and of *Virtue*—from *Knowledge,* and *Love,* as being the most essential properties of the soul—from the *Order* of *Creation*—from the nature of *Ambition, Avarice, Pleasure.* A digression on the grandeur of the *Passions.* *Immortality* alone renders our present state intelligible. An objection from the *Stoics* disbelief of immortality answered. Endless questions unresolvable, but on supposition of our *immortality.* The natural, most melancholy, and pathetic complaint of a worthy man, under the persuasion of no *futurity.* The gross absurdities and horrors of *annihilation* urg'd home on LORENZO. The soul's vast *importance*—from whence it arises — The *Difficulty* of being an infidel—the *Infamy*—The *Cause,* and the *Character,* of an infidel state. What *true* free-thinking is. The *necessary* punishment of the false. Man's ruin is from *himself.* An infidel accuses himself of *guilt,* and *hypocrisy*; and that of the worst sort. His obligation to *Christians*—What danger he incurs by *Virtue*—Vice recommended to him—His high pretences to *Virtue,* and *Benevolence,* exploded. The conclusion, on the nature of *Faith,—Reason* and *Hope*; with an apology for this attempt.

HEAV'N gives the needful, but neglected call.
What day, what hour, but knocks at human hearts,
To wake the soul to sense of future scenes?
Deaths stand, like *Mercury*'s, in ev'ry way,
And kindly point us to our journey's end.
POPE, who couldst make immortals! art thou dead?
I give thee joy: Nor will I take my leave;
So soon to follow. Man but dives in death;
Dives from the sun, in fairer day to rise;
The grave, his subterranean road to bliss.
Yes, infinite indulgence plann'd it so;
Thro' various parts our glorious story runs;
Time gives the preface, *endless age* unrolls
The volume (ne'er unroll'd!) of human fate.
This, earth and *skies* * *already* have proclaim'd.
The world's a prophecy of worlds to come;
And who, what GOD foretells (who speaks in *things*,
Still louder than in *words*) shall dare deny?
If *nature*'s arguments appear too weak,
Turn a new leaf, and stronger read in *man*.

* Night the Sixth.

If man sleeps on, untaught by what he *sees*,
Can he prove infidel to what he *feels*?
He, whose blind thought futurity denies,
Unconscious bears, BELLEROPHON! like thee,
His own indictment; he condemns himself;
Who reads his bosom, reads immortal life;
Or, *nature*, there, imposing on her sons,
Has written fables; man was made a *lye*.
Why *discontent* for ever harbour'd there?
Incurable consumption of our peace!
Resolve me, why, the *cottager*, and *king*,
He, whom sea-sever'd realms obey, and he
Who steals his whole dominion from the waste,
Repelling winter blasts with mud and straw,
Disquieted alike, draw sigh for sigh,
In fate so distant, in complaint so near?
Is it, that things *terrestrial* can't content?
Deep in rich pasture will thy flocks complain?
Not so; but to their master is deny'd
To share their sweet *serene*. Man, ill at ease,
In this, not *his own* place, this foreign field,
Where nature fodders him with other food,
Than was ordain'd his cravings to suffice,
Poor in abundance, famish'd at a feast,
Sighs on for something *more*, when *most* enjoy'd.
Is heav'n then kinder to thy flocks than thee?
Not so; thy pasture richer, but remote;
In part, remote; for that remoter part
Man bleats from *instinct*, tho' perhaps, debauch'd
By *sense*, his *reason* sleeps, nor dreams the cause.

The cause how obvious, when his reason wakes!
His grief is but his grandeur in disguise;
And discontent is *immortality*.
Shall sons of æther, shall the blood of heav'n,
Set up their hopes on earth, and stable *here*,
With brutal acquiescence in the mire?
LORENZO! no! they shall be nobly pain'd;
The glorious *foreigners*, distrest, shall sigh
On thrones; and thou *congratulate* the sigh:
Man's misery declares him born for bliss;
His *anxious* heart asserts the truth I sing,
And gives the *sceptic* in his head the lye.
Our heads, our hearts, our *passions*, and our *pow'rs*,
Speak the same language; call us to the skies:
Unripen'd *these* in this inclement clime,
Scarce rise above conjecture, and mistake;
And for this land of trifles *those* too strong
Tumultuous rise, and tempest human life:
What prize on earth can pay us for the storm?
Meet objects for our *passions* heav'n ordain'd,
Objects that challenge all their fire, and leave
No fault, but in defect: Blest Heav'n! avert
A bounded ardor for unbounded bliss!
O for a bliss *unbounded!* Far beneath
A soul immortal, is a mortal joy.
Nor are our *pow'rs* to perish immature;
But, after feeble effort *here*, beneath
A brighter sun, and in a nobler soil,
Transplanted from this sublunary bed,
Shall flourish fair, and put forth all their bloom.

Reason progressive, *instinct* is complete;
Swift *instinct* leaps; slow *reason* feebly climbs.
Brutes soon their zenith reach; their little all
Flows in at once; in ages they no more
Could know, or do, or covet, or enjoy.
Were *man* to live coëval with the sun,
The patriarch-pupil would be learning still;
Yet, dying, leave his lesson half unlearnt.
Men perish in advance, as if the sun
Should set ere noon, in *eastern* oceans drown'd;
If fit, with *dim, illustrious* to compare,
The sun's *meridian* with the *soul* of man.
To man, why, stepdame *nature!* so severe?
Why thrown aside thy master-piece half-wrought,
While meaner efforts thy last hand enjoy?
Or, if abortively, poor man must die,
Nor reach, what reach he might, why die in *dread?*
Why curst with foresight? Wise to misery?
Why of his proud prerogative the prey?
Why less pre-eminent in rank, than pain?
His *immortality* alone can tell;
Full ample fund to balance all amiss,
And turn the scale in favour of the just!
His *immortality* alone can solve
The darkest of *ænigmas*, human *hope;*
Of all the darkest, if at death we die.
Hope, eager hope, th' assassin of our joy,
All *present* blessings treading under foot,
Is scarce a milder tyrant than *despair.*
With no past toils content, still planting new,

Stothard del.t Rothwell sculp.t

Hope, eager hope, the assassin of our joy,
All present blessings treading underfoot. Page 162

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UNIV. OF MICH.

Hope turns us o'er to death alone for ease.
Possession, why more tasteless than *pursuit*?
Why is a wish far dearer than a crown?
That wish accomplish'd, why, the grave of bliss?
Because, in the *great future* bury'd deep,
Beyond our plans of empire, and renown,
Lies *all* that man with ardor should pursue;
And HE who made him, bent him to the right.
Man's heart th' ALMIGHTY to the *future* sets,
By secret and inviolable springs;
And makes his hope his sublunary joy.
Man's heart eats all things, and is hungry still;
"More, more!" the glutton cries: For something *new*
So rages appetite, if man can't mount,
He *will* descend. He starves on the *possest*.
Hence, the world's master, from ambition's spire,
In *Caprea* plung'd; and div'd beneath the brute.
In that rank sty why wallow'd empire's son
Supreme? Because he could no higher fly;
His *riot* was *ambition* in despair.
Old *Rome* consulted birds; LORENZO! thou
With more success, the flight of *hope* survey;
Of restless hope, for ever on the wing.
High-perch'd o'er ev'ry thought that falcon sits,
To fly at all that rises in her sight;
And never stooping, but to mount again
Next moment, she betrays her aim's mistake,
And owns her quarry lodg'd beyond the grave.
There should it fail us (it must fail us there,
If *being* fails) more mournful riddles rise,

And *virtue* vies with *hope* in mystery.
Why *virtue?* Where its praise, its being, fled?
Virtue is true self-interest pursu'd:
What true self-interest of *quite*-mortal man?
To close with all that makes him happy *here.*
If vice (as sometimes) is our friend on earth,
Then vice is virtue; 'tis our *sov'reign* good.
In *self-applause* is virtue's golden prize;
No self-applause attends it on *thy* scheme:
Whence self-applause? From conscience of the right.
And what is right, but means of happiness?
No means of happiness when *virtue* yields;
That basis failing, falls the building too,
And lays in ruin ev'ry *virtuous joy.*
The rigid guardian of a blameless heart,
So long rever'd, so long reputed wise,
Is weak; with rank knight-errantries o'er-run.
Why beats thy bosom with illustrious dreams
Of self-exposure, laudable, and great?
Of gallant enterprize, and glorious death?
Die for thy country! Thou romantic fool!
Seize, seize the plank thyself, and let her sink:
Thy *country!* what to Thee?—The *Godhead,* what?
(I speak with awe!) tho' He should bid thee bleed?
If, with thy blood, thy *final* hope is spilt,
Nor can Omnipotence reward the blow,
Be deaf; preserve thy being; disobey.
Nor is it disobedience: Know, LORENZO!
Whate'er th' ALMIGHTY's subsequent command,
His first command is *this:*—"Man, love thyself."

In this alone, free-agents are *not* free.
Existence is the basis, bliss the prize:
If *virtue* costs existence, 'tis a crime;
Bold violation of our law *supreme*,
Black suicide; tho' nations, which consult
Their gain, at thy expence, resound applause.
Since *virtue*'s recompence is doubtful, *here*,
If man dies wholly, well may we demand,
Why is man *suffer'd* to be good in vain?
Why to be good in vain, is man *injoin'd?*
Why to be good in vain, is man *betray'd?*
Betray'd by traitors lodg'd in his own breast,
By sweet complacencies from virtue felt?
Why whispers *nature* lyes on virtue's part?
Or if blind *instinct* (which assumes the name
Of sacred conscience) plays the fool in man,
Why *reason* made accomplice in the cheat?
Why are the *wisest* loudest in her praise?
Can man by *reason*'s beam be led astray?
Or, at his peril, *imitate his God?*
Since virtue *sometimes* ruins us on earth,
Or both are true; or, man survives the grave.
Or man survives the grave, or own, LORENZO,
Thy boast supreme, a wild absurdity.
Dauntless thy spirit; cowards are thy scorn,
Grant man *immortal*, and thy scorn is just.
The man *immortal*, rationally brave,
Dares rush on death—because he cannot die.
But if man loses All, when life is lost,
He lives a coward, or a fool expires.

A *daring* infidel (and such there are,
From pride, example, lucre, rage, revenge,
Or pure *heroical* defect of thought),
Of all earth's madmen, most deserves a chain.
When to the grave we follow the renown'd
For valour, virtue, science, all we love,
And all we praise; for *worth*, whose noon-tide beam,
Enabling us to think in higher style,
Mends our ideas of ethereal powers;
Dream we, that lustre of the *moral* world
Goes out in stench, and rottenness the close?
Why was he wise to *know*, and warm to *praise*,
And strenuous to *transcribe*, in human life,
The Mind ALMIGHTY? Could it be, that fate,
Just when the lineaments began to shine,
And dawn the DEITY, should snatch the draught,
With night eternal blot it out, and give
The skies alarm, lest *angels* too might die?
If human souls, why not angelic too
Extinguish'd? and a *solitary* GOD,
O'er ghastly ruin, frowning from his throne?
Shall we this moment gaze on GOD in man?
The next, lose man for ever in the dust?
From dust we disengage, or man *mistakes;*
And there, where least his judgment fears a flaw.
Wisdom and *worth*, how boldly he commends!
Wisdom and *worth*, are sacred names; rever'd,
Where not embrac'd; applauded! deify'd!
Why not *compassion'd* too? If spirits die,
Both are calamities, *inflicted* both,

To make us but more wretched: *Wisdom's* eye,
Acute, for what? To spy more miseries?
And *worth, so* recompens'd, new-points their stings.
Or man surmounts the grave, or gain is loss,
And worth exalted *humbles* us the more.
Thou wilt not patronize a scheme that makes
Weakness, and *vice*, the refuge of mankind.
" Has virtue, then, no joys?"—Yes, joys *dear-bought.*
Talk ne'er so long, in this imperfect state,
Virtue and vice are at eternal war.
Virtue's a combat; and who fights for nought?
Or for precarious, or for small reward?
Who virtue's *self-reward* so loud resound,
Would take degrees *angelic* here below,
And *virtue*, while they compliment, betray,
By feeble motives, and unfaithful guards.
The crown, th' *unfading* crown, her soul inspires:
'Tis That, and That alone, can countervail
The body's treacheries, and the *world*'s assaults:
On earth's poor pay our famisht virtue dies.
Truth incontestable! In spite of all
A BAYLE has preach'd, or a V——E believ'd.
In man the more we dive, the more we see
Heav'ns signet stamping an *immortal* make.
Dive to the bottom of his soul, the base
Sustaining all; what find we? *Knowledge, Love.*
As light and heat, essential to the sun,
These to the soul. And *why*, if souls expire?
How little lovely *here?* How little known?
Small *knowledge* we dig up with endless toil;
And *love* unfeign'd may purchase perfect hate.

Why starv'd, on earth, our *angel* appetites;
While *brutal* are indulg'd their fulsome fill?
Were then capacities *divine* conferr'd,
As a mock diadem, in savage sport,
Rank insult of our pompous *poverty*,
Which reaps but pain, from seeming claims so fair?
In future age lies no redress? And shuts
Eternity the door on our complaint?
If so, for what strange ends were mortals made?
The worst to *wallow*, and the best to *weep*;
The man who merits most, must most complain:
Can we conceive a disregard in heav'n,
What the worst *perpetrate*, or best *endure*?
This cannot be. To *love*, and *know*, in man
Is boundless appetite, and boundless pow'r;
And these demonstrate boundless objects too.
Objects, pow'rs, appetites, heav'n suits in All;
Nor *nature* thro', e'er violates this sweet,
Eternal concord, on her tuneful string.
Is *man* the sole exception from her laws?
Eternity struck off from human hope,
(I speak with truth, but veneration too)
Man is a monster, the reproach of heav'n,
A stain, a dark impenetrable cloud
On nature's beauteous aspect; and deforms,
(Amazing blot!) deforms her with her *lord*.
If such is man's allotment, what is heav'n?
Or own the soul *immortal*, or blaspheme.
Or own the soul immortal, or invert
All *order*. Go, mock-majesty! go, man!

And bow to thy superiors of the stall;
Thro' ev'ry scene of *sense* superior far:
They graze the turf untill'd; they drink the stream
Unbrew'd, and ever full, and unembitter'd
With doubts, fears, fruitless hopes, regrets, despairs;
Mankind's peculiar! *reason*'s precious dower!
No foreign clime *they* ransack for their robes;
Nor brothers cite to the litigious bar;
Their good is good intire, unmixt, unmarr'd;
They find a paradise in ev'ry field,
On boughs *forbidden* where no curses hang:
Their *ill* no more than strikes the sense; unstrecht
By previous dead, or murmur in the rear:
When the *worst* comes, it comes unfear'd; one stroke
Begins, and ends their woe: They die but *once;*
Blest, incommunicable privilege! for which
Proud man, who rules the globe, and reads the stars,
Philosopher, or *hero*, sighs in vain.
Account for this prerogative in brutes.
No day, no glimpse of day, to solve the knot,
But what beams on it from *eternity.*
O sole, and sweet solution! That unties
The difficult, and softens the severe;
The cloud on *nature*'s beauteous dispels;
Restores bright *order;* casts the brute beneath;
And re-inthrones us in supremacy
Of joy, ev'n *here:* Admit immortal life,
And virtue is *knight-errantry* no more;
Each *virtue* brings in hand a golden dower,
Far richer in reversion: *Hope* exults;

And 'tho much bitter in our cup is thrown,
Predominates, and gives the taste of heaven.
O wherefore is the DEITY so kind?
Astonishing beyond astonishment!
Heav'n our reward—for heav'n enjoy'd *below.*
Still unsubdu'd thy stubborn *heart?*—For *there*
The traitor lurks who doubts the truth I sing.
Reason is guiltless; *will* alone rebels.
What, in that stubborn heart, if I should find
New, unexpected witnesses 'gainst thee?
Ambition, pleasure, and the *love of gain!*
Canst thou suspect, that *these,* which make the soul
The *slave* of earth, should own her *heir* of heav'n?
Canst thou suspect what makes us *disbelieve*
Our immortality, should prove it *sure?*
First, then, *ambition* summon to the bar.
Ambition's *shame, extravagance, disgust,*
And *inextinguishable nature,* speak.
Each much *deposes;* hear them in their turn.
Thy soul, how passionately fond of *fame!*
How anxious, that fond passion to conceal!
We blush, detected in designs on praise,
Tho' for best deeds, and from the best of men.
And why? Because *immortal.* Art divine
Has made the body tutor to the soul;
Heav'n kindly gives our blood a *moral* flow;
Bids it ascend the glowing cheek, and there
Upbraid that little heart's inglorious aim,
Which stoops to court a character from man;
While o'er us, in tremendous judgment sit
Far more than man, with *endless* praise and blame.

Ambition's *boundless appetite* out-speaks
The verdict of its *shame*. When souls take fire
At high presumptions of their own desert,
One age is poor applause; the mighty shout,
The thunder by the living *few* begun,
Late time must echo; worlds unborn, resound.
We wish our names *eternally* to live:
Wild dream, which ne'er had haunted human thought,
Had not our natures been *eternal* too.
Instinct points out an int'rest in hereafter;
But our blind *reason* sees not *where* it lies;
Or, seeing, gives the substance for the shade.
Fame is the shade of immortality,
And in itself a shadow. Soon as caught,
Contemn'd; it shrinks to nothing in the grasp.
Consult th' ambitious, 'tis ambition's cure.
"And is This all?" cry'd CÆSAR at his height,
Disgusted. This *third* proof ambition brings
Of immortality. The first in fame,
Observe him near, your envy will abate:
Sham'd at the disproportion vast, between
The passion, and the purchase, he will sigh
At *such* success, and blush at his renown.
And why? Because far richer prize invites
His heart; far more illustrious glory calls;
It calls in whispers, yet the deafest hear.
And can ambition a *fourth* proof supply?
It can, and stronger than the former three;
Yet quite o'er-look'd by some reputed wise.
Tho' disappointments in ambition *pain*,

And tho' success *disgusts;* yet still, LORENZO!
In vain we strive to pluck it from our hearts;
By nature planted for the noblest ends.
Absurd the fam'd advice to PYRRHUS given,
More prais'd, than ponder'd; specious, but unsound;
Sooner than hero's *sword* the world had quell'd,
Than *reason*, his ambition. Man *must* soar.
An obstinate activity within,
An insuppressive spring, will toss him up
In spite of *fortune's* load. Not kings alone,
Each villager has his ambition too;
No *Sultan* prouder than his fetter'd slave:
Slaves build their little *Babylons* of straw,
Echo the proud *Assyrian*, in their hearts,
And cry,—"Behold the wonders of my might!"
And why? Because *immortal* as their lord;
And souls immortal must for ever heave
At something great; the glitter, or the gold;
The praise of mortals, or the praise of heaven.
Nor absolutely vain is *human* praise,
When human is supported by *divine*.
I'll introduce LORENZO to Himself;
Pleasure and *pride* (bad masters) share our hearts.
As love of *pleasure* is ordain'd to guard
And feed our bodies, and extend our race;
The love of *praise* is planted to protect,
And propagate the glories of the mind.
What is it, but the *love of praise*, inspires,
Matures, refines, embellishes, exalts,
Earth's happiness? From *that*, the delicate,

The grand, the marvellous, of *civil* life,
Want and *convenience*, under-workers, lay
The basis, on which *love of glory* builds.
Nor is *thy* life, O *virtue!* less in debt
To praise, thy secret stimulating friend.
Were men not *proud*, what merit should we miss!
Pride made the virtues of the pagan world.
Praise is the salt that seasons *right* to man,
And whets his appetite for *moral* good.
Thirst of applause is virtue's *second* guard;
Reason, her first; but reason wants an aid;
Our *private* reason is a flatterer;
Thirst of appause calls *public* judgment in,
To poise our own, to keep an even scale,
And give endanger'd virtue fairer play.
Here a *fifth* proof arises, stronger still:
Why this so nice construction of our hearts?
These delicate moralities of *sense*;
This *constitutional* reserve of aid
To succour virtue, when our *reason* fails;
If virtue, kept alive by care and toil,
And oft the mark of injuries on earth,
When labour'd to maturity (its bill
Of disciplines, and pains, unpaid) must die?
Why freighted-rich, to dash against a rock?
Were man to perish when most fit to live,
O how mis-spent were all these stratagems,
By skill divine inwoven in our frame!
Where are heav'n's holiness and mercy fled?

Laughs heav'n, at once, at *virtue*, and at *man*?
If not, why *that* discourag'd, *this* destroy'd?
Thus far *ambition*. What says *avarice*?
This *her* chief maxim, which has long been *Thine*:
"The wise and wealthy are the same,"—I grant it.
To store up treasure with incessant toil,
This is man's province, *this* his highest praise.
To this great end keen *instinct* stings him on.
To guide that instinct, *reason!* is thy charge;
'Tis thine to tell us where *true* treasure lies:
But, reason failing to discharge her trust,
Or to the deaf discharging it in vain,
A blunder follows; and blind *industry*,
Gall'd by the spur, but stranger to the course,
(The course where stakes of more than gold are won)
O'er-loading, with the cares of distant age,
The jaded spirits of the *present* hour,
Provides for an *eternity* below.
"*Thou shalt not covet*," is a wise command;
But bounded to the wealth the sun surveys:
Look farther, the command stands quite revers'd,
And *av'rice* is a virtue most divine.
Is *faith* a refuge for our *happiness*?
Most sure: And is it not for *reason* too?
Nothing *this* world unriddles, but the *next*.
Whence inextinguishable thirst of gain?
From inextinguishable life in man:
Man, if not meant, by *worth*, to reach the skies,
Had wanted wing to fly so far in *guilt*.
Sour grapes, I grant, *ambition*, *avarice*,

Yet still their root is *immortality:*
These its wild growths so bitter, and so base,
(Pain and reproach!) *religion* can reclaim,
Refine, exalt, throw down their pois'nous lee,
And make them sparkle in the bowl of *bliss.*
  See, the *third witness* laughs at bliss remote,
And falsely promises an *Eden* here:
Truth she shall speak for once, tho' prone to lye,
A common cheat, and *Pleasure* is her name.
To pleasure never was LORENZO deaf;
Then hear her now, now *first* thy *real* friend.
  Since nature made us not more fond than *proud*
Of happiness (whence hypocrites in joy!
Makers of mirth! artificers of smiles!)
Why should the joy most poignant *sense* affords,
Burn us with blushes, and rebuke our pride?—
Those heav'n-born blushes tell us man *descends,*
Ev'n in the zenith of his *earthly* bliss:
Should *reason* take her infidel repose,
This honest *instinct* speaks our lineage high;
This instinct calls on darkness to conceal
Our rapturous relation to the stalls.
Our *glory* covers us with noble *shame,*
And he that's unconfounded, is *unmann'd.*
The man that blushes, is not quite a *brute.*
Thus far with Thee, LORENZO! will I close,
Pleasure is good, and man for pleasure made;
But pleasure full of glory, as of joy;
Pleasure, which neither *blushes,* nor *expires.*

The witnesses are heard; the cause is o'er;
Let *conscience* file the sentence in her court,
Dearer than *deeds* that half a realm convey;
Thus seal'd by *truth*, th' authentic record runs,
" Know All; know, infidels,—unapt to know!
" 'Tis *immortality* your nature solves;
" 'Tis *immortality* decyphers man,
" And opens all the myst'ries of his make.
" Without it, half his *instincts* are a riddle;
" Without it, all his *virtues* are a dream.
" His very *crimes* attest his dignity;
" His sateless thirst of *pleasure, gold,* and *fame,*
" Declares him born for blessings *infinite:*
" What less than infinite makes un-absurd
" *Passions,* which *all* on earth but more inflames?
" Fierce passions, so mis-measur'd to *this* scene,
" Stretch'd out, like eagles wings, beyond our nest,
" Far, far beyond the worth of all below,
" For *earth* too large, presage a nobler flight,
" And evidence our title to the *skies.*"
Ye gentle theologues, of calmer kind!
Whose constitution dictates to your pen,
Who, cold yourselves, think ardour comes from hell!
Think not our passions from *corruption* sprung,
Tho' to corruption now they lend their wings;
That is their *mistress,* not their *mother.* All
(And justly) reason deem divine: I see,
I feel a grandeur in the *passions* too,
Which speaks their high descent, and glorious end;
Which speaks them rays of an eternal fire.

In Paradise itself they burnt as strong,
Ere ADAM fell; tho' wiser in their aim.
Like the proud *Eastern*, struck by providence,
What tho' our *passions* are run mad, and stoop
With low, terrestrial appetite, to graze
On trash, on toys, dethron'd from high desire?
Yet still, thro' their disgrace, no feeble ray
Of greatness shines, and tells us whence they fell:
But *these* (like that fall'n monarch when reclaim'd),
When *reason* moderates the reign aright,
Shall re-ascend, remount their former sphere,
Where once they soar'd illustrious; ere reduc'd
By wanton EVE's debauch, to stroll on earth,
And set the sublunary world on fire.
  But grant their phrenzy lasts; their phrenzy fails
To disappoint *one* providential end,
For which heav'n blew up ardor in our hearts:
Were *reason* silent, boundless *passion* speaks
A future scene of boundless *objects* too,
And brings glad tidings of *eternal* day.
Eternal day! 'Tis that enlightens All;
And All, by that enlighten'd, proves it *sure*.
Consider man as an *immortal* being,
Intelligible All! and All is great;
A chrystalline transparency prevails,
And strikes full lustre thro' the human sphere:
Consider man as *mortal*, All is dark,
And wretched; *reason* weeps at the survey.
  The learn'd LORENZO cries, "And let her weep,
"Weak, *modern* reason: *Ancient* times were wise,

" *Authority*, that venerable guide,
" *Stands* on my part; the fam'd *Athenian* porch
" (And who for wisdom so renown'd as They?)
" Deny'd this immortality to man."
I grant it; but affirm, they *prov'd* it too.
A riddle this!—Have patience; I'll explain.
What noble vanities, what moral flights,
Glitt'ring thro' their romantic wisdom's page,
Make us, at once, despise them, and admire?
Fable is flat to these high-season'd Sires;
They leave th' extravagance of song below.
" Flesh shall not feel; or, feeling, shall enjoy
" The dagger, or the rack; to them, alike
" A bed of roses, or the burning bull."
In men exploding all beyond the grave,
Strange doctrine, This! As *doctrine*, it was strange;
But not, as *prophecy*; for such it prov'd,
And, to their own amazement, was fulfill'd:
They feign'd a firmness *Christians* need not feign.
The *Christian* truly triumph'd in the flame:
The *Stoic* saw, in double wonder lost,
Wonder at Them, and Wonder at Himself,
To find the bold adventures of his thought
Not bold, and that he strove to lie in vain.
Whence, then, those thoughts? Those tow'ring thoughts, that flew
Such monstrous heights? From *instinct*, and from *pride*.
The glorious *instinct* of a deathless soul,
Confus'dly conscious of her dignity,

Suggested truths they could not understand.
In *lust*'s dominion, and in *passion*'s storm,
Truth's system broken, scatter'd fragments lay,
As light in chaos, glimm'ring thro' the gloom:
Smit with the pomp of lofty sentiments,
Pleas'd *pride* proclaim'd, what *reason* disbeliev'd.
Pride, like the *Delphic* priestess, with a swell,
Rav'd nonsense, destin'd to be *future* sense,
When life *immortal*, in full day, shall shine;
And *death*'s *dark shadows* fly the gospel sun.
They spoke, what nothing but *immortal* souls
Could speak; and thus the truth they question'd, prov'd.
Can then *absurdities*, as well as *crimes*,
Speak man *immortal?* All things speak him so.
Much has been urg'd; and dost thou call for more?
Call; and with endless questions be distrest,
All unresolvable, if *earth* is All.
" Why life, a moment; infinite, desire?
" Our wish, Eternity? Our home, the Grave?
" Heav'n's *promise* dormant lies in human *hope;*
" Who *wishes* life immortal, *proves* it too.
" Why happiness pursu'd, tho' never found?
" Man's thirst of happiness declares *It is,*
" (For nature never gravitates to thought);
" That thirst unquencht declares *It is not Here.*
" *My* LUCIA, *Thy* CLARISSA, call to nought;
" Why *cordial friendship* riveted so deep,
" As hearts to pierce at first, at parting, rend,
" If friend, and friendship, vanish in an hour?

" Is not This torment in the mask of joy?
" Why by *reflection* marr'd the joys of *sense?*
" Why *past*, and *future*, preying on our hearts,
" And putting all our *present* joys to death?
" Why labours *reason? instinct* were as well;
" Instinct far better; what can *chuse*, can *err:*
" O how *infallible* the thoughtless brute!
" 'Twere well his *Holiness* were half as sure.
" *Reason* with *inclination*, why at war?
" Why sense of *guilt?* why *conscience* up in arms?"
Conscience of guilt, is prophecy of pain,
And bosom-council to decline the blow.
Reason with inclination ne'er had jarr'd,
If nothing future paid forbearance Here:
Thus on—These, and a thousand pleas uncall'd,
All *promise*, some *ensure*, a second scene;
Which, were it *doubtful*, would be dearer far
Than all things else most *certain;* were it *false*,
What *truth* on earth so precious as the lye?
This world it gives us, let what will ensue;
This world it gives, in that high cordial, *hope:*
The future of the present is the soul:
How *this* life groans, when sever'd from the *next!*
Poor mutilated wretch, that disbelieves!
By dark distrust his being cut in two,
In *both* parts perishes; *life* void of joy,
Sad prelude of *Eternity* in pain!
Couldst thou persuade me, the next life could fail
Our ardent wishes; how should I pour out
My bleeding heart in anguish, *new*, as deep!

Oh! with what thoughts, thy *hope*, and my *despair*,
Abhorr'd ANNIHILATION! blasts the soul,
And wide extends the bounds of human woe!
Could I believe LORENZO's system true,
In *this* black channel would my ravings run.
" *Grief* from the *future* borrow'd peace, ere while.
" The future *vanisht!* and the present *pain'd!*
" Strange import of unprecedented ill!
" Fall, how profound! Like LUCIFER's the fall!
" Unequal fate! His fall, without his guilt!
" From where fond *hope* built her pavilion high,
" The gods among, hurl'd headlong, hurl'd at once
" To night! To *nothing!* Darker still than night.
" If 'twas a *dream*, why wake me, my worst Foe,
" LORENZO! boastful of the name of Friend!
" O for delusion! O for error still!
" Could vengeance strike much stronger than to plant
" A *thinking* being in a world like This,
" Not over-rich before, *now* beggar'd quite;
" More curst than at the *fall?*—The sun goes out!
" The thorns shoot up! What thorns in every thought!
" Why sense of better? It imbitters worse.
" Why sense? why life? If but to sigh, then sink
" To what I was! *twice* nothing! and much woe!
" Woe, from heav'n's bounties! woe from what was wont
" To flatter most, high *intellectual pow'rs.*
" *Thought, virtue, knowledge!* blessings, by *thy* scheme,
" All poison'd into pains. First, *knowledge*, once

" My soul's ambition, *now* her greatest dread.
" To *know myself*, true wisdom? No, to shun
" That shocking science, parent of despair!
" Avert thy mirror: If I see, I die.
" *Know my Creator!* Climb His blest abode
" By painful speculation, pierce the veil,
" Dive in His nature, read His attributes,
" And gaze in admiration—on a *foe*,
" Obtruding life, with-holding happiness!
" From the full rivers that surround his throne,
" Not letting fall one drop of joy on man;
" Man grasping for one drop, that he might cease
" To curse his birth, nor envy *reptiles* more!
" Ye sable clouds! ye darkest shades of night!
" Hide *Him*, for ever hide Him, from thy thought,
" Once all my comfort; source, and soul of joy!
" Now leagu'd with furies, and with * *Thee*, against
" me.
" *Know his atchievements?* Study his renown?
" Contemplate this amazing universe,
" Dropt from His hand, with miracles replete!
" For what? 'Mid miracles of nobler name,
" To find one miracle of *misery?*
" To find the Being, which alone can *know*
" And *praise* His works, a blemish on His praise?
" Thro' nature's ample range, in thought, to stroll,
" And start at *man*, the single mourner There.
" Breathing high hope! chain'd down to pangs, and
" death?

* LORENZO.

" Knowing is suff'ring: And shall *virtue* share
" The sigh of *knowledge?*—Virtue shares the sigh.
" By straining up the steep of *excellent,*
" By battles fought, and, from temptation, won,
" What gains she, but the pang of seeing worth,
" *Angelic* worth, soon shuffled in the dark
" With ev'ry vice, and swept to *brutal* dust?
" Merit is madness; virtue is a crime;
" A crime to *reason,* if it costs us pain
" *Unpaid:* What pain, amidst a thousand more,
" To think the most *abandon'd,* after days
" Of triumph o'er their betters, find in death
" As *soft* a pillow, nor make *fouler* clay!
" *Duty! Religion!*——These, our duty done,
" Imply reward. *Religion* is mistake.
" *Duty!*—There's none, but to repel the cheat.
" Ye cheats! away! ye daughters of my pride!
" Who feign yourselves the fav'rites of the skies:
" Ye tow'ring hopes! abortive energies!
" That toss, and struggle, in my *lying* breast,
" To scale the skies, and build presumptions There,
" As I were heir of an *Eternity.*
" Vain, vain ambitions! trouble me no more.
" Why travel far in quest of sure defeat?
" As bounded as my being, be my wish.
" All is inverted, *wisdom* is a fool.
" *Sense!* take the rein; blind *passion!* drive us on;
" And *ignorance!* befriend us on our way;
" Ye *new,* but *truest* patrons of our peace!
" Yes; give the *pulse* full empire; live the *brute,*

" Since, as the brute, we die. The *sum* of man,
" Of Godlike man! to *revel*, and to *rot*.
" But not on equal terms with *other* brutes:
" *Their* revels a more poignant relish yield,
" And safer too; *they* never poisons chuse.
" *Instinct*, than *reason*, makes more wholesome meals,
" And sends all-marring murmur far away.
" For *sensual* life *they* best philosophize;
" *Theirs*, that *serene*, the *sages* sought in vain:
" 'Tis *man* alone expostulates with heav'n;
" *His*, all the *pow'r*, and all the *cause*, to mourn.
" Shall *human* eyes *alone* dissolve in tears?
" And bleed, in anguish, none but *human* hearts?
" The wide-stretcht realm of *intellectual* woe,
" Surpassing *sensual* far, is All our Own.
" In *life* so fatally distinguisht, why
" Cast in one lot, confounded, lumpt, in *death*?
" Ere yet in being, was mankind in guilt?
" Why thunder'd this peculiar *clause* against us,
" *All-mortal, and All-wretched!*—Have the skies
" Reasons of state, their subjects may not scan,
" Nor *humbly* reason, when they *sorely* sigh?
" *All-mortal, and all-wretched!*—'Tis too much
" Unparallel'd in nature: 'Tis too much
" On being *unrequested* at Thy hands,
" OMNIPOTENT! for I see nought but *power*.
" And why see That? Why *thought*? To toil, and eat,
" Then make our bed in darkness, needs no thought.
" What superfluities are *reas'ning* souls!

" Oh give Eternity! or Thought destroy.
" But without thought our curse were half unfelt;
" Its blunted edge would spare the throbbing heart;
" And, *therefore*, 'tis bestow'd, I thank thee, *Reason*!
" For aiding *life*'s too small calamities,
" And giving being to the dread of *death*.
" Such are thy bounties!—Was it then too much
" For *me*, to trespass on the brutal rights?
" Too much for *heav'n* to make one emmet more?
" Too much for *chaos* to permit my mass
" A longer stay with essences unwrought,
" Unfashion'd, *untormented* into *man?*
" Wretched *preferment* to this round of pains!
" Wretched capacity of phrensy, *thought!*)
" Wretched capacity of dying, *life!*
" *Life, thought, worth, wisdom*, All (O foul revolt!)
" Once friends to peace, gone over to the foe.
" *Death*, then, has chang'd his nature too: O death!
" Come to my bosom, thou best gift of heav'n!
" Best friend of man! since man is man no more.
" Why in this thorny *wilderness* so long,
" Since there's no *promis'd land*'s ambrosial bower,
" To pay me with its honey for my stings?
" If needful to the selfish schemes of heaven
" To sting us sore, why *mockt* our misery?
" Why this so sumptuous insult o'er our heads?
" Why this illustrious canopy display'd?
" Why so magnificently lodg'd *despair?*
" At stated periods, sure-returning, roll

" These *glorious orbs*, that mortals may compute
" Their length of labours, and of pains; nor lose
" Their misery's full measure?—Smiles with flowers,
" And fruits, promiscuous, ever-teeming *earth*,
" That man may languish in *luxurious* scenes,
" And in an *Eden* mourn his wither'd joys?
" Claim earth and skies man's admiration, due
" For *such* delights! Blest *animals!* too wise
" To *wonder;* and too happy to *complain!*
" Our *doom decreed* demands a mournful scene:
" Why not a dungeon dark, for the *condemn'd?*
" Why not the dragon's subterranean den,
" For man to howl in? Why not his abode
" Of the same dismal colour with his fate?
" A *Thebes*, a *Babylon*, at vast expence
" Of time, toil, treasure, art, for owls and adders,
" As congruous, as, for man, this lofty dome,
" Which prompts proud thought, and kindles high
" desire;
" If, from her humble chamber in the dust,
" While proud thought swells, and high desire in-
" flames,
" The poor *worm* calls us for her inmates *there;*
" And, round us, *death's* inexorable hand
" Draws the dark curtain close; undrawn no more.
" *Undrawn no more!*—Behind the cloud of *death*,
" Once, I beheld a sun; a sun which gilt
" That sable cloud, and turn'd it all to gold;
" How the *grave*'s alter'd! Fathomless, as hell!
" A *real* hell to Those who dreamt of heav'n.

" ANNIHILATION! How it yawns before me!
" Next moment I may drop from *thought*, from *sense*,
" The privilege of *angels*, and of *worms*,
" An outcast from existence! And this spirit,
" This all-pervading, this all-conscious soul,
" This particle of energy divine.
" Which travels nature, flies from star to star,
" And visits gods, and emulates their powers,
" For ever is extinguisht, Horror! death!
" Death of *that* death I *fearless* once survey'd!—
" When horror *universal* shall descend,
" And heav'n's dark concave urn all human race,
" On that enormous, unrefunding tomb,
" How just this verse! this monumental sigh!"

Beneath the lumber of demolisht worlds,
Deep in the rubbish of the gen'ral wreck,
Swept ignominious to the common mass
Of matter, never dignify'd with life,
Here lie proud rationals; *The sons of heaven!*
The lords of earth! the property of worms!
Beings of yesterday, and no to-morrow!
Who liv'd in terror, and in pangs expir'd!
All gone to rot in chaos; *or to make*
Their happy transit into blocks *or* brutes,
Nor longer sully their CREATOR'S *name.*

LORENZO! hear, pause, wonder, and pronounce.
Just is this history? If *such* is man,
Mankind's historian, tho' divine, might weep.
And dares LORENZO smile!—I know thee proud;

For once let *pride* befriend thee; pride looks pale
At such a scene, and sighs for something more.
Amid thy boasts, presumptions, and displays,
And art thou then a shadow? Less than shade?
A nothing? *Less* than Nothing? To *have* been,
And *not to be*, is lower than Unborn.
Art thou *ambitious?* Why then make the worm
Thine equal? Runs thy taste of *pleasure* high?
Why patronize sure death of ev'ry joy?
Charm *riches?* Why chuse begg'ry in the grave,
Of ev'ry hope a bankrupt! and for ever?
Ambition, pleasure, avarice, persuade thee
To make that world of glory, rapture, wealth,
They * lately *prov'd*, the soul's supreme desire.
What art thou made of? Rather, how Unmade?
Great *nature*'s master-appetite destroy'd!
Is endless life, and happiness, despis'd?
Or both wish't, *here*, where neither can be found?
Such man's perverse, eternal war with heav'n!
Dar'st thou persist? And is there nought on earth,
But a long train of transitory forms,
Rising, and breaking, millions in an hour?
Bubbles of a fantastic deity, blown up
In sport, and then in cruelty destroy'd?
Oh! for what crime, unmerciful LORENZO!
Destroys thy scheme the *whole* of human race?
Kind is fell LUCIFER, compar'd to Thee:
Oh! spare this *waste* of being half-divine;
And vindicate th' *œconomy* of heaven.

* In the Sixth Night.

Heav'n is all love; all joy in giving joy:
It never had created, but to *bless:*
And shall it, then, strike off the list of life,
A being blest, or worthy *so* to be?
Heav'n starts at an *annihilating* GOD.
Is That, all *nature* starts at, thy desire?
Art such a clod to wish thyself *all* clay?
What is that dreadful wish?—The dying groan
Of *nature,* murder'd by the blackest guilt.
What deadly poison has thy nature drank?
To nature undebaucht no shock so great;
Nature's *first* wish is *endless happiness;*
Annihilation is an after-thought,
A monstrous wish, unborn till virtue dies.
And, oh! what depth of horror lies inclos'd!
For non-existence no man ever wisht,
But, first, he wisht the DEITY destroy'd.
If so; what words are dark enough to draw
Thy picture true? The darkest are too fair.
Beneath what baleful planet, in what hour
Of desperation, by what fury's aid,
In what infernal posture of the soul,
All hell invited, and all hell in joy
At such a birth, a birth so near of kin,
Did thy foul *fancy* whelp so black a scheme
Of *hopes* abortive, *faculties* half-blown,
And *deities begun,* reduc'd to dust?
There's nought (thou say'st) but one eternal flux
Of feeble essences, tumultuous driven
Thro' *time*'s rough billows into *night*'s abyss.

Say, in this rapid *tide* of human ruin,
Is there no *rock*, on which man's tossing thought
Can rest from terror, dare his fate survey,
And boldly think it *something* to be born?
Amid such hourly wrecks of being fair,
Is there no central, all-sustaining *base*,
All-realizing, all-connecting *power*,
Which, as it call'd forth all things, can *recall*,
And force *destruction* to refund her spoil?
Command the grave restore her taken prey?
Bid death's dark vale its human harvest yield,
And *earth*, and *ocean*, pay their debt of man,
True to the grand deposit trusted *there*?
Is there no *potentate*, whose out-stretcht arm,
When rip'ning time calls forth th' appointed hour,
Pluckt from foul *devastation*'s famisht maw,
Binds *present*, *past*, and *future*, to his throne?
His throne, how glorious, thus divinely grac'd,
By germinating beings clust'ring round!
A garland worthy the divinity!
A throne, by heav'n's omnipotence *in smiles*,
Built (like a *pharos* tow'ring in the waves)
Amidst immense effusions of his love!
An ocean of *communicated* bliss!
An all-prolific, all-preserving GOD!
This were a GOD indeed.—And such *is* man,
As here presum'd: He rises from his fall.
Think'st thou Omnipotence a naked root,
Each blossom fair of DEITY destroy'd?
Nothing is dead; nay, Nothing sleeps; each soul,

That ever animated human clay,
Now wakes; is on the wing: And where, O where,
Will the swarm settle?—When the *trumpet*'s call,
As sounding brass, collects us, round heav'ns throne
Conglob'd, we bask in everlasting day,
(Paternal splendor!) and adhere for ever.
Had not the soul this *outlet* to the skies,
In this vast vessel of the universe,
How should we gasp, as in an empty void!
How in the pangs of famisht *hope* expire!
How bright *my* prospect shines! how gloomy, *thine!*
A trembling world! and a devouring god!
Earth, but the Shambles of Omnipotence!
Heav'n's face all stain'd with causeless massacres
Of countless millions, born to feel the pang
Of being *lost*. LORENZO! can it be?
This bids us shudder at the thoughts of *life*.
Who would be born to such a phantom world,
Where nought substantial but our misery?
Where joy (if joy) but heightens our distress,
So soon to perish, and revive no more?
The greater *such* a joy, the *more* it pains.
A world, so far from *great* (and yet how great
It shines to thee!) there's nothing *real* in it;
Being, a shadow; *consciousness*, a dream?
A dream, how dreadful! Universal blank
Before it, and behind! Poor man, a spark
From non-existence struck by wrath divine,
Glitt'ring a moment, nor that moment sure,

'Midst upper, nether, and surrounding *night*,
His sad, sure, sudden, and eternal tomb!
LORENZO! dost thou *feel* these arguments?
Or is there nought but *vengeance* can be felt?
How hast thou dar'd the DEITY dethrone?
How dar'd *indict* Him of a world like this?
If *such* the world, creation was a crime;
For what is crime, but cause of misery?
Retract, blasphemer! and unriddle *this*,
Of endless arguments *above*, *below*,
Without us, and *within*, the short result——
"*If man's immortal, there's a* GOD *in heaven.*"
But wherefore such redundancy? such waste
Of argument? One sets *my* soul at rest!
One obvious, and at hand, and, oh!—at *heart*.
So just the skies, PHILANDER's life so pain'd,
His heart so pure; *that*, or *succeeding* scenes
Have palms to give, or ne'er had he been born.
"*What an old tale is this!*" LORENZO cries.
I grant this argument is old; but truth
No years impair; and had not this been true,
Thou never hadst despis'd it for its age.
Truth is immortal as thy soul! and *fable*
As fleeting as thy joys: Be wise, nor make
Heav'n's highest blessing vengeance; O be wise!
Nor make a curse of *immortality*.
Say, know'st thou what *it* is, or what *thou* art?
Know'st thou th' *importance* of a soul immortal?
Behold this midnight glory: Worlds on worlds!
Amazing pomp! redouble this amaze;

Ten thousand add; and twice ten thousand more;
Then weigh the whole; *one* soul outweighs them all;
And calls th' astonishing magnificence
Of *unintelligent* creation *poor*.
For this, believe not *me*; no *man* believe;
Trust not in words, but deeds; and deeds no less
Than those of the SUPREME; nor His, a few;
Consult them *all*; consulted, all proclaim
Thy soul's importance: Tremble at thyself;
For whom *Omnipotence* has wak'd so long:
Has wak'd, and work'd for ages, from the birth
Of nature to this *unbelieving* hour.
In this small province of His vast domain
(All *nature* bow, while I pronounce His Name!)
What has GOD done, and not for *this* sole end,
To rescue souls from death? The *soul's high price*
Is writ in all the conduct of the skies.
The *soul's high price* is the *Creation's Key*,
Unlocks its mysteries, and naked lays
The genuine cause of ev'ry deed divine:
That, in the *chain of ages*, which maintain
Their obvious correspondence, and unites
Most distant periods in one blest design:
That, is the *mighty hinge*, on which have turn'd
All revolutions, whether we regard
The *nat'ral*, *civil*, or *religious*, world;
The former two but servants to the third:
To that their duty done, they both expire,
Their *mass* new-cast, forgot their *deeds renown'd*;
And angels ask, "*Where once they shone so fair?*"

To lift us from this abject, to sublime;
This flux, to permanent; this dark, to day;
This foul, to pure; this turbid, to serene;
This mean, to mighty!—for *this* glorious end
Th' ALMIGHTY, rising, his long sabbath broke!
The world was made; was ruin'd; was restor'd;
Laws from the skies were publish'd; were repeal'd;
On *earth* kings, kingdoms, rose; kings, kingdoms, fell;
Fam'd sages lighted up the *pagan* world;
Prophets from *Sion* darted a keen glance
Thro' distant age; saints travell'd; martyrs bled;
By wonders sacred nature stood controul'd;
The living were translated; dead were rais'd;
Angels, and *more* than angels, came from heaven;
And, oh! for *this*, descended lower still;
Guilt was hell's gloom; astonish'd at his guest,
For one short moment LUCIFER ador'd:
LORENZO! and wilt thou do less?—For *this*,
That *hallow'd page*, fools scoff at, was inspir'd,
Of all these truths thrice venerable code!
Deists! perform your quarantine; and then
Fall prostrate, ere you touch it, lest you die.
Nor less intensely bent *infernal* powers
To mar, than those of *light*, *this* end to gain.
O what a scene is here!—LORENZO! wake!
Rise to the thought; exert, expand thy soul
To take the vast idea: It denies
All *else* the name of great. Two warring worlds!
Not *Europe* against *Afric*; warring worlds!

Of *more* than mortal! mounted on the wing!
On ardent wings of energy, and zeal,
High-hov'ring o'er this little brand of strife!
This sublunary ball—But strife, for what?
In their own cause conflicting? No; in *thine*,
In *man*'s. His *single* int'rest blows the flame;
His the sole stake; his fate the trumpet sounds,
Which kindles war immortal. How it burns!
Tumultuous swarms of deities in arms!
Force, force opposing, till the waves run high,
And tempest nature's universal sphere.
Such opposites eternal, stedfast, stern,
Such foes implacable, are *good*, and *ill*;
Yet man, vain man, would mediate peace between
them.
Think not this fiction, "*There was war in heav'n.*"
From heav'n's high chrystal mountain, where it hung,
Th' ALMIGHTY's out-strecht arm took down his bow:
And shot his indignation at the *deep*:
Re-thunder'd *hell*, and darted all her fires.—
And seems the stake of little moment still?
And slumbers *man*, who singly caus'd the storm?
He sleeps.—And art thou shockt at *mysteries*?
The greatest, Thou. How dreadful to reflect,
What ardor, care, and counsel, *mortals* cause
In breasts divine! How little in their own!
Where-e'er I turn, how new *proofs* pour upon me!
How happily this wond'rous view supports
My former argument! How strongly *strikes*
Immortal life's full demonstration, *here!*
Why this exertion? Why this strange regard

From heav'n's Omnipotent indulg'd to man?—
Because, in man, the glorious dreadful power,
Extremely to be pain'd, or blest, for *ever*.
Duration gives importance; swells the price.
An angel, if a creature of a day,
What would he be? A trifle of no weight;
Or stand, or fall; no matter which; he's gone.
Because IMMORTAL, therefore is indulg'd
This strange regard of deities to dust.
Hence, heav'n looks down on earth with all her eyes:
Hence, the soul's mighty moment in her sight:
Hence, ev'ry soul has partisans above,
And ev'ry thought a critic in the skies:
Hence, clay, vile clay! has angels for its guard,
And ev'ry guard a passion for his charge:
Honce, from all age, the cabinet divine
Has held high counsel o'er the fate of man.
Nor have the clouds those gracious counsels hid,
Angels undrew the curtain of the throne,
And PROVIDENCE came forth to meet mankind:
In various modes of emphasis and awe,
He shoke his will, and trembling *nature* heard;
He spoke it loud, in thunder and in storm.
Witness, thou *Sinai!* whose cloud-cover'd height,
And shaken basis, own'd the present GOD:
Witness, ye *billows!* whose returning tide,
Breaking the chain that fasten'd it in air,
Swept *Egypt*, and her menaces, to hell:
Witness, ye *flames!* th' *Assyrian* tyrant blew
To sev'nfold rage, as impotent, as strong:
And thou, *earth!* witness, whose expanding jaws

Clos'd o'er * *presumption*'s sacrilegious sons:
Has not each element, in turn, subscrib'd
The *soul's high price*, and sworn it to the wise?
Has not flame, ocean, æther, earthquake, strove
To strike *this truth*, thro' adamantine man?
If not all-adamant, LORENZO! hear;
All is delusion; *nature* is wrapt up,
In tenfold night, from *reason's* keenest eye;
There's no consistence, meaning, plan, or end,
In all beneath the sun, in all above,
(As far as man can penetrate) or heaven
Is an immense, inestimable prize;
Or all is Nothing, or that prize is all.—
And shall each *toy* be still a match for heaven,
And full equivalent for groans below?
Who would not give a trifle to *prevent*
What he would give a thousand worlds to *cure*?
LORENZO! thou hast seen (if thine to see)
All *nature*, and her GOD (by nature's *course*,
And nature's course *controul'd*) declare for me:
The skies above proclaim, "*immortal* man!"
And, "man *immortal!*" all below resounds.
The world's a system of theology,
Read by the greatest strangers to the schools;
If *honest*, learn'd; and *sages* o'er a plough.
Is not, LORENZO! then, impos'd on thee
This hard alternative; or, to renounce
Thy *reason*, or thy *sense*; or to *believe*?

* KORAH, &c.

What then is *unbelief?* 'Tis an exploit;
A strenuous enterprize: To gain it, man
Must burst through ev'ry bar of common sense,
Of common shame, magnanimously wrong;
And what rewards the sturdy combatant?
His prize, *repentance*; *infamy*, his crown.
But wherefore *infamy*?—For want of *faith*,
Down the steep precipice of *wrong* he slides;
There's nothing to support him in the *right*.
Faith in the future wanting, is, at least
In *embryo*, ev'ry weakness, ev'ry guilt;
And strong temptation ripens it to *birth*.
If *this* life's gain invites him to the deed,
Why not his country sold, his father slain?
'Tis virtue to pursue our good supreme;
And his supreme, his *only* good is *here*.
Ambition, *av'rice*, by the wise disdain'd,
Is perfect *wisdom*, while mankind are *fools*,
And think a turf, or tomb-stone, covers all:
These find employment, and provide for *sense*
A richer pasture, and a larger range;
And *sense* by right divine ascends the throne,
When *virtue's* prize and prospect are no more;
Virtue no more we think the will of heaven.
Would heav'n quite *beggar* virtue, if belov'd?
"Has *virtue* charms?"—I grant her heav'nly fair;
But if unportion'd, all will *int'rest* wed;
Tho' *that* our admiration, *this* our choice.
The virtues grow on *immortality*;
That root destroy'd, they wither and expire.

A DEITY believ'd, will nought avail;
Rewards and *punishments* make GOD ador'd;
And *hopes* and *fears* give *conscience* all her power.
As in the dying parent dies the child,
Virtue, with *immortality*, expires.
Who tells me he denies his soul immortal,
Whate'er his boast, has told me, *He's a knave.*
His *duty* 'tis, to love himself *alone*;
Nor care tho' mankind perish, if he smiles.
Who thinks ere long the man shall *wholly* die,
Is dead already; nought but *brute* survives.
And are there such?—Such candidates there are
For *more* than death; for utter loss of being,
Being, the basis of the DEITY!
Ask you the *cause*?—The cause they will not tell:
Nor *need* they: Oh the sorceries of *sense!*
They work this transformation on the soul:
Dismount her, like the serpent at the fall,
Dismount her from her native wing (which soar'd
Ere-while ethereal heights), and throw her down,
To lick the dust, and *crawl* in such a thought.
Is it in words to paint you? O ye fall'n!
Fall'n from the wings of *reason*, and of *hope!*
Erect in stature, prone in appetite!
Patrons of pleasure, posting into pain!
Lovers of argument, averse to sense!
Boasters of liberty, fast bound in chains!
Lords of the wide creation, and the shame!
More *senseless* than th' *irrationals* you scorn!
More *base* than those you rule! Than those you pity,

Far more *undone!* O ye most infamous
Of beings, from superior dignity!
Deepest in woe from means of boundless bliss!
Ye curst by blessings infinite! Because
Most highly favour'd, most profoundly lost!
Ye motly mass of *contradiction* strong!
And are you, too, convinc'd, your souls fly off
In exhalation soft, and die in air,
From the full flood of evidence *against* you?
In the coarse drudgeries, and sinks of *sense*,
Your souls have quite worn out the make of heaven,
By vice new-cast, and creatures of your own:
But tho' you can *deform*, you can't *destroy*;
To *curse*, not *uncreate*, is all your power.
LORENZO! this black brotherhood renounce;
Renounce St. *Evremont*, and read St. *Paul*.
Ere rapt by miracle, by *reason* wing'd,
His mounting mind made long abode in heaven.
This is *freethinking*, unconfin'd to *parts*,
To send the soul, on curious travel bent,
Thro' all the provinces of human thought;
To dart her flight, thro' the whole sphere of man;
Of this vast universe to make the tour;
In each recess of *space*, and *time*, at home;
Familiar with their wonders; diving deep;
And, like a prince of boundless int'rests *there*,
Still most ambitious of the most remote;
To look on *truth* unbroken, and intire;
Truth in the *system*, the full orb; where truths
By truths enlighten'd, and sustain'd, afford

An arch-like, strong foundation, to support
Th' incumbent weight of absolute, complete
Conviction; here, the more we press, we stand
More firm; who most *examine*, most *believe*.
Parts, like half-sentences, confound; the *whole*
Conveys the sense, and GOD is understood;
Who not in *fragments* writes to human race:
Read this *whole* volume, sceptic! then reply.
This, *this*, is *thinking free*, a thought that grasps
Beyond a grain, and looks beyond an hour.
Turn up thine eye, survey this midnight scene;
What are earth's kingdoms, to yon boundless orbs,
Of human souls, one day, the destin'd range!
And what yon boundless orbs, to godlike *man*?
Those num'rous worlds that throng the firmament,
And ask more space in heav'n, can roll at large
In man's capacious thought, and still leave room
For ampler orbs, for *new* creations, there.
Can *such* a soul contract itself, to gripe
A point of no dimension, of no weight?
It can; it does: The *world* is such a point:-
And, of *that* point, how *small* a part enslaves!
How small a part—of *nothing*, shall I say?
Why not?—*Friends*, our *chief* treasure! how they drop!
LUCIA, NARCISSA fair, PHILANDER, gone!
The *grave*, like fabled *Cerberus*, has op'd
A triple mouth; and, in an awful voice,
Loud calls my soul, and utters all I sing.
How the world falls to pieces round about us,
And leaves us in a ruin of our joy!
What says this *transportation* of my friends?

It bids me love the place where *now* they dwell,
And scorn this wretched spot, they leave so poor.
Eternity's vast *ocean* lies before thee;
There; there, LORENZO! thy CLARISSA sails.
Give thy mind sea-room; keep it wide of *earth*,
That rock of souls *immortal*; cut thy cord;
Weigh anchor; spread thy sails; call ev'ry wind;
Eye thy *Great Pole-star*; make the land of life.
Two kinds of life has *double-natur'd* man,
And two of death; the *last* far more severe.
Life *animal* is nurtur'd by the sun;
Thrives on his bounties, triumphs in his beams.
Life *rational* subsists in higher food,
Triumphant in *His* beams, who made the day.
When we leave *that* sun, and are left by *this*,
(The fate of all who die in stubborn guilt)
'Tis *utter* darkness; strictly *double* death.
We sink by no *judicial* stroke of heaven,
But nature's *course*; as sure as plumbets fall.
Since GOD, or man, must alter, ere they meet,
(Since light and darkness blend not in one sphere)
'Tis manifest, LORENZO! *who* must change.
If, then, that *double death* should prove thy lot,
Blame not the bowels of the DEITY;
Man shall be blest, as far as man *permits*.
Not man alone, all *rationals*, heaven arms
With an illustrious, but tremendous, power
To counter-act its own most gracious ends;
And this, of strict necessity, not choice;
That pow'r deny'd, *men*, *angels*, were no more

But passive engines, void of praise, or blame.
A nature *rational* implies the power
Of being blest or wretched, as we please;
Else idle *reason* would have nought to do:
And he that would be barr'd capacity
Of pain, courts incapacity of bliss.
Heav'n *wills* our happiness, *allows* our doom;
Invites us ardently, but not *compels*;
Heav'n but *persuades*, almighty man *decrees*;
Man is the maker of immortal fates,
Man falls by man, if finally he falls;
And fall he *must*, who learns from *death* alone,
The dreadful secret,—That he lives for Ever.
Why *this* to Thee?—Thee yet, perhaps, in doubt
Of second life? But wherefore doubtful still?
Eternal life is nature's ardent wish:
What ardently we wish, we *soon* believe:
Thy *tardy* faith declares that wish destroy'd:
What has destroy'd it?—Shall I tell thee what?
When *fear'd the future*, 'tis no longer wisht;
And, when unwisht, we *strive* to disbelieve.
" *Thus infidelity our guilt betrays.*"
Nor that the *sole* detection! Blush, LORENZO;
Blush for hypocrisy, if not for guilt.
The *future fear'd?*—An *infidel*, and fear?
Fear what? a *dream?* a *fable?*—How thy dread,
Unwilling evidence, and therefore *strong*,
Affords my cause an undesign'd support!
How *disbelief* affirms, what it denies!
" *It, unawares, asserts immortal life.*"—

Surprising; *infidelity* turns out
A *creed*, and a *confession of our sins:*
Apostates, *thus*, are orthodox divines.
LORENZO! with LORENZO clash no more;
Nor longer a *transparent* vizor wear.
Think'st thou, RELIGION *only* has her mask?
Our infidels are *Satan*'s hypocrites,
Pretend the worst, and, at the bottom, *fail.*
When visited by thought (thought *will* intrude),
Like him they serve, they *tremble*, and *believe.*
Is there hypocrisy so foul as this?
So fatal to the welfare of the world?
What *detestation*, what *contempt* their due?
And, if unpaid, be thank'd for their escape
That Christian candor they *strive* hard to scorn.
If not for that asylum, they might find
A hell on *earth*; nor 'scape a worse *below.*
With insolence, and impotence of thought,
Instead of racking fancy, to *refute*,
Reform thy manners, and the truth *enjoy.*—
But shall I dare confess the dire result?
Can thy proud *reason* brook so black a brand?
From *purer manners* to *sublimer faith*,
Is nature's unavoidable ascent;
An *honest* deist, where the gospel shines,
Matur'd to nobler, in the *Christian* ends.
When that blest change arrives, e'en cast aside
This song superfluous; *life immortal* strikes
Conviction, in a flood of light *divine.*

A *Christian* dwells, like URIEL,* in the sun;
Meridian evidence puts *doubt* to flight;
And ardent *hope* anticipates the skies.
Of *that* bright sun, LORENZO! scale the sphere;
'Tis easy! it invites thee; it descends
From heav'n to wooe, and waft thee whence it came:
Read and revere the *sacred page;* a page
Where triumphs *immortality;* a page
Which not the whole *creation* could produce;
Which not the *conflagration* shall destroy;
'Tis printed in the mind of gods for ever,
In nature's ruins not one letter lost.
In proud disdain of what e'en gods adore,
Dost smile?—Poor wretch! thy guardian angel weeps.
Angels, and *men*, assent to what I sing;
Wits smile, and thank me for my *midnight dream.*
How vicious hearts fume phrenzy to the brain!
Parts push us on to pride, and pride to shame;
Pert *infidelity* is *wit*'s cockade,
To grace the brazen brow that braves the skies,
By *loss of being*, dreadfully secure.
LORENZO! if *thy* doctrine wins the day,
And drives my dreams defeated, from the field;
If *This* is All, if *earth* a *final* scene,
Take heed; stand fast; be sure to be a *knave;*
A knave in grain! ne'er deviate to the *right:*
Should'st thou be *good*—How infinite thy loss!
Guilt only makes *annihilation* gain.

* MILTON.

Blest scheme! which life deprives of *comfort*, death
Of *hope*; and which VICE *only* recommends.
If so, *where*, infidels! your bait thrown out
To catch weak converts? *Where* your lofty boast
Of *zeal for virtue*, and of *love to man?*
ANNIHILATION! I confess, in *these*.
What can *reclaim* you? Dare I hope profound
Philosophers the converts of a *song?*
Yet know, *its title* * flatters *you*, not *me*;
Yours be the praise to make *my* title good;
Mine, to bless heav'n, and triumph in *your* praise.
But since so pestilential your disease,
Tho' sovereign is the med'cine I prescribe,
As yet, I'll neither triumph, nor despair:
But hope, ere long, my *midnight dream* will wake
Your hearts, and teach your *wisdom*—to be wise:
For why should souls immortal, made for bliss,
E'er wish (and wish in vain!) that souls could die?
What ne'er *can* die, Oh! grant to *live*; and crown
The wish, and aim, and labour of the skies;
Increase, and *enter* on the joys of heaven:
Thus shall my title pass a *sacred* seal,
Receive an *imprimatur* from Above,
While angels shout—*An Infidel reclaimed!*
To close, LORENZO! spite of all my pains,
Still seems it strange, that thou should'st live *for ever!*
Is it *less* strange, that thou should'st live *at all?*
This is a miracle; and *That* no more.
Who gave beginning, can exclude an end.

* The Infidel Reclaimed.

Deny thou *art*: Then, doubt if thou *shalt be.*
A miracle with miracles inclos'd,
Is man; And starts his faith at what is *strange?*
What less than wonders, from the *wonderful*;
What less than miracles, from GOD, can flow?
Admit a GOD—that mystery supreme!
That Cause uncaus'd! all other wonders cease;
Nothing is marvellous for *Him* to do:
Deny Him—all is mystery besides;
Millions of mysteries? *Each* darker far,
Than *that* thy wisdom would, unwisely shun.
If *weak* thy faith, why choose the harder side?
We nothing *know*, but what is marvellous;
Yet what is marvellous, we can't *believe.*
So *weak* our *reason*, and so *great* our GOD,
What most surprises in the *sacred page*,
Or full as strange, or stranger, *must* be true.
Faith is not *reason*'s labour, but repose.
To *faith*, and *virtue*, why so backward, man?
From hence:—The *present* strongly strikes us all;
The *future*, faintly: Can we, then, be *men?*
If men, LORENZO! the *reverse* is right.
Reason is man's peculiar: *Sense*, the brute's.
The *present* is the scanty realm of *sense*;
The *future*, *reason*'s empire unconfin'd:
On *that* expending all her godlike power,
She plans, provides, expatiates, triumphs, *there*;
There, builds her *blessings!* There, expects her *praise*;
And nothing asks of *fortune*, or of *men*,
And what is *reason?* Be she, thus, defin'd;

Reason is *upright stature* in the *soul.*
Oh ! be a *man !*—and strive to be a *god.*
" For what ? (thou says't) To damp the joys of life ?"
No ; to give *heart* and *substance* to thy joys.
That tyrant *hope* ; mark how she domineers ;
She bids us quit realities, for dreams :
Safety and peace, for hazard and alarm ;
That tyrant o'er the tyrants of the soul,
She bids *ambition* quit its taken prize,
Spurn the luxuriant branch on which *it* sits,
Tho' bearing crowns, to spring at *distant* game ;
And plunge in toils and dangers—for repose.
If *hope* precarious, and of things, when gain'd,
Of little moment, and as little stay,
Can sweeten toils, and dangers into joys ;
What then, *that* hope, which nothing can defeat,
Our leave unask'd ? Rich hope of boundless bliss !
Bliss, past *man*'s pow'r to paint it ; *time*'s to close !
This hope is earth's most estimable prize :
This is man's portion, while no more than man :
Hope, of all passions, most befriends us *here* ;
Passions of prouder name befriend us less.
Joy has her *tears* ; and transport has her *death* ;
Hope, like a cordial, innocent, tho' strong,
Man's heart, at once, *inspirits* and *serenes* !
Nor makes him pay his wisdom for his joys !
'Tis All, our present state can *safely* bear,
Health to the frame ! and vigour to the mind !
A joy attemper'd ! a *chastis'd* delight !

Like the fair summer ev'ning, mild, and sweet!
'Tis man's full cup; his paradise below!
A blest hereafter, *then*, or hop'd, or gain'd,
Is All;—our *whole* of happiness: Full proof,
I chose no trivial or inglorious *theme*.
And know, ye foes to song! (well-meaning men,
Tho' quite forgotten * half your *Bible*'s praise!)
Important truths, in spite of *verse*, may please:
Grave minds you praise; nor can you praise too much:
If there is weight in an ETERNITY,
Let the *grave* listen;—and be *graver still*.

* The poetical parts of it.

NIGHT THE EIGHTH.

VIRTUE's APOLOGY;

OR,

The Man of the World Answered.

NIGHT THE EIGHTH.

VIRTUE's APOLOGY;

OR,

THE MAN OF THE WORLD ANSWERED.

In which are Considered,

THE LOVE OF THIS LIFE;

THE AMBITION AND PLEASURE, WITH THE WIT AND WISDOM OF THE WORLD.

AND has all nature, then, espous'd my part?
Have I brib'd heav'n, and earth, to plead against thee?
And is thy soul *immortal?*—What remains?
All, All, LORENZO!—Make immortal, blest.
Unblest immortals!—What can shock us more?
And yet LORENZO still affects *the world*;
There, stows his treasure; Thence his title draws,
Man of the world (for such wouldst thou be call'd)
And art thou proud of that inglorious style?
Proud of reproach? For a reproach it *was*,
In antient days; and CHRISTIAN,—in an age,
When men were men, and not asham'd of heaven,
Fir'd their ambition, as it crown'd their joy.
Sprinkled with dews from the *Castalian* font,
Fain would I re-baptize thee, and confer
A purer spirit, and a nobler name.

Thy fond attachments fatal, and inflam'd,
Point out my path, and dictate to my song:
To Thee, the *world how fair!* How strongly strikes
Ambition! and gay *pleasure* stronger still!
Thy triple bane! the triple bolt that lays
Thy virtue dead! Be *these* my triple theme;
Nor shall thy *wit*, or *wisdom*, be forgot.
Common the theme; not so the song; if She
My song invokes, URANIA, deigns to smile.
The charm that chains us to the world, her foe,
If she dissolves, the *man of earth*, at once,
Starts from his trance, and sighs for other scenes;
Scenes, where these sparks of night, these *stars* shall shine
Unnumber'd suns (for all things, as they *are*,
The blest behold); and, in one glory, pour
Their blended blaze on man's astonisht sight;
A blaze—the least illustrious object *there*.
LORENZO! since *eternal* is at hand,
To swallow *time*'s ambitions; as the vast
Leviathan, the bubbles vain, that ride
High on the foaming billow; what avail
High titles, high descent, attainments high,
If unattain'd our *highest?* O LORENZO!
What lofty thoughts, these elements above,
What tow'ring hopes, what sallies from the sun,
What grand surveys of destiny divine,
And pompous presage of unfathom'd fate,
Should roll in bosoms, where a spirit burns,
Bound for eternity! In bosoms read

By *Him*, who foibles in archangels sees!
On human hearts *He bends* a jealous eye,
And marks, and in heav'n's register inrolls,
The rise, and progress, of each option there;
Sacred to doomsday! *That* the page unfolds,
And spreads us to the gaze of gods and men.
And what an option, O LORENZO! thine?
This world! and This, unrivall'd by the ſkies!
A world, where lust of *pleasure, grandeur, gold,*
Three *dæmons* that divide its realms between them,
With strokes alternate buffet to and fro
Man's restless heart, their sport, their flying ball;
Till, with the giddy circle sick, and tir'd,
It pants for peace, and drops into despair.
Such is the world LORENZO sets above
That glorious *promise* angels were esteem'd
Too *mean* to bring; a promise, their *Ador'd*
Descended to communicate, and press,
By counsel, miracle, life, death, on man,
Such is the world LORENZO's wisdom wooes,
And on its thorny pillow seeks repose;
A pillow, which, like opiates ill-prepar'd,
Intoxicates, but not composes; fills
The visionary mind with gay chimæras,
All the wild trash of sleep, without the rest;
What *unfeign'd* travel, and what dreams of joy!
How frail, men, things! How momentary, Both!
Fantastic chace of shadows hunting shades!
The *gay*, the *busy*, equal, tho' unlike;
Equal in wisdom, differently wise!

Thro' flow'ry meadows, and thro' dreary wastes,
One bustling, and one dancing, into death.
There's not a day, but, to the man of thought,
Betrays some secret, that throws new reproach
On life, and makes him sick of seeing more.
The scenes of *bus'ness* tell us—"What are men;"
The scenes of *pleasure*—"What is all beside;"
There, Others we despise; and *Here*, ourselves.
Amid *disgust* eternal, dwells delight?
'Tis *approbation* strikes the string of joy.
What wond'rous prize has kindled this career,
Stuns with the din, and choaks us with the dust,
On life's gay stage, one inch above the grave?
The *proud* run up and down in quest of eyes;
The *sensual*, in pursuit of something worse;
The *grave*, of gold; the *politic*, of power;
And all, of other butterflies, as vain!
As eddies draw things frivolous, and light,
How is man's heart by *vanity* drawn in;
On the swift circle of returning toys,
Whirl'd, straw-like, round and round, and then ingulph'd,
Where gay delusion darkens to despair!
"*This is a beaten track.*"—Is this a track
Should not be beaten? Never beat enough,
Till enough learnt the truths it would inspire.
Shall Truth be silent, because Folly *frowns*?
Turn the world's history; what find we there,
But *fortune*'s sports, or *nature*'s cruel claims,
Or *woman*'s artifice, or *man's* revenge,

And endless inhumanities on man?
Fame's trumpet seldom sounds, but, like the knell,
It brings bad tidings: How it hourly blows
Man's misadventures round the list'ning world!
Man is the tale of narrative old *time*;
Sad tale; which high as *Paradise* begins;
As if, the toil of travel to delude,
From stage to stage, in his eternal round,
The *days*, his daughters, as they spin our hours
On *fortune*'s wheel, where accident unthought
Oft, in a moment, snaps life's strongest thread,
Each, in her turn, some tragic story tells,
With, now-and-then, a wretched farce between;
And fills his chronicle with human woes.
Time's daughters, true as those of men, deceive us;
Not one, but puts some cheat on all mankind:
While in their *father*'s bosom, not yet *ours*,
They flatter our fond hopes; and promise much
Of amiable; but hold *him* not o'erwise,
Who dares to trust them; and laugh round the year
At still-confiding, still-confounded, man.
Confiding, tho' confounded; hoping on,
Untaught by trial, unconvinc'd by proof,
And ever-looking for the never-seen.
Life to the last, like harden'd felons, lyes
Nor owns itself a cheat, till it expires.
Its little joys go out by One and One,
And leave poor man, at length, in perfect night;
Night darker, than what, *now*, involves the pole.

O THOU, who dost permit these ills to fall,
For gracious ends, and would'st that man should mourn!
O THOU, whose hands this goodly fabric fram'd,
Who know'st it best, and would'st that man should know!
What is this sublunary world? A vapour;
A vapour all it holds itself, a vapour;
From the damp bed of chaos, by Thy beam
Exhal'd, ordain'd to swim its destin'd hour
In ambient air, then melt, and disappear.
Earth's days are number'd, nor remote her doom;
As mortal, tho' less transient, than her sons;
Yet they doat on her, as the world and they
Were both eternal, solid; THOU, a dream.
They doat! on What? *Immortal views* apart,
A region of outsides! a land of shadows!
A fruitful field of flow'ry promises!
A wilderness of joys! perplext with doubts,
And sharp with thorns! a troubled *ocean*, spread
With bold adventurers, their *all* on board!
No second hope, if here their fortune frowns;
Frown soon it *must*. Of various rates they sail,
Of ensigns various; All alike in This,
All restless, anxious; tost with hopes, and fears,
In calmest skies; obnoxious All to storm;
And stormy the most gen'ral blast of life:
All bound for happiness; yet few provide
The chart of *knowledge*, pointing where it lies;
Or *virtue*'s helm, to shape the course design'd:
All, more or less, capricious fate lament,
Now lifted by the tide, and now resorb'd,

And farther from their wishes than before:
All, more or less, against each other dash.
To mutual hurt, by gusts of passion driven,
And suff'ring more from folly, than from fate.
Ocean! Thou dreadful and tumultuous home,
Of dangers, at eternal war with man!
Death's capital, where most he domineers,
With all his chosen *terrors* frowning round,
(Tho' lately feasted high at * *Albion*'s cost)
Wide-op'ning, and loud-roaring still for more!
Too faithful mirror! how dost thou reflect
The melancholy face of human life!
The strong resemblance tempts me farther still:
And, haply, *Britain* may be deeper struck
By *moral truth*, in such a mirror seen,
Which nature holds for ever at her eye.
Self-flatter'd, unexperienc'd, high in hope,
When *young*, with sanguine chear, and streamers gay,
We cut our cable, launch into the world,
And fondly dream each wind and star our friend;
All, in some darling enterprize embarkt:
But where is he can fathom its extent?
Amid a multitude of artless hands,
Ruin's sure perquisite! her lawful prize!
Some steer aright; but the black blast blows hard,
And puffs them wide of hope: With hearts of proof.
Full against wind, and tide, *some* win their way;
And when strong effort has deserv'd the port,

* Admiral BALCHEN, &c.

And tugg'd it into view, 'tis won! 'tis lost!
Tho' strong their oar, still stronger is their fate:
They strike; and while they triumph they expire.
In stress of weather, *most; some* sink outright;
O'er them, and o'er their names, the billows close;
To-morrow knows not they were ever born.
Others a short memorial leave behind,
Like a flag floating, when the bark's ingulph'd;
It floats a moment, and is seen no more:
One CÆSAR lives; a thousand are forgot.
How few, beneath auspicious planets born,
(Darlings of Providence! fond fate's elect!)
With swelling sails make good the promis'd port,
With all their wishes freighted! Yet ev'n These,
Freighted with all their wishes, soon complain;
Free from misfortune, not from nature free,
They still are men; and when is man secure?
As fatal *time*, as *storm!* the rush of years
Beats down their ſtrength; their numberless escapes
In ruin end: And, now, their proud success
But plants *new* terrors on the victor's brow:
What pain to quit the world, just made their own,
Their nest so deeply down'd, and built so high!
Too low they build, who build beneath the stars.
Woe then apart (if woe apart can be
From mortal man), and fortune at our nod,
The gay! rich! great! triumphant! and august!
What are they?—The *most* happy (strange to say!)
Convince *me* most of human misery;
What are they? Smiling wretches of *to-morrow!*

More wretched, *then*, than e'er their slave *can* be;
Their treach'rous blessings, at the day of need,
Like other faithless friends, unmask, and sting:
Then, what provoking indigence in wealth!
What aggravated impotence in power!
High titles, *then*, what insult of their pain!
If that sole anchor, equal to the waves,
Immortal hope! defies not the rude storm,
Takes comfort from the foaming billow's rage,
And makes a welcome harbour of the tomb.
Is This a *sketch* of what thy soul admires?
" But here (thou say'st) the miseries of life
" Are huddled in a group. A more distinct
" Survey, perhaps, might bring thee better news."
Look on life's stages: They speak plainer still;
The plainer they, the deeper wilt thou sigh.
Look on thy lovely boy; in him behold
The best that can befal the best on earth;
The boy has virtue by his *mother*'s side:
Yes, on FLORELLO look: A *father*'s heart
Is tender, tho' the *man*'s is made of stone;
The truth, thro' such a medium seen, may make
Impression deep, and fondness prove thy friend.
FLORELLO lately cast on this rude coast
A helpless infant; now a heedless child;
To poor CLARISSA's throes, thy care succeeds;
Care full of love, and yet severe as hate!
O'er thy soul's joy how oft thy fondness frowns!
Needful austerities his will restrain;
As thorns fence in the tender plant from harm.

As yet, his *reason* cannot go alone;
But asks a sterner nurse to lead it on.
His little heart is often terrify'd;
The blush of morning, in his cheek, turns pale;
Its pearly dew-drop trembles in his eye;
His harmless eye! and drowns an angel there.
Ah! what avails his innocence? The task
Injoin'd must discipline his early powers;
He learns to sigh, ere he is known to sin;
Guiltless, and sad! A wretch before the fall!
How cruel this! More cruel to forbear.
Our *nature* such, with *necessary* pains,
We purchase prospects of *precarious* peace:
Tho' not a *father*, This might steal a sigh.
Suppose him disciplin'd aright (if not,
'Twill sink our poor account to poorer still);
Ripe from the tutor, proud of liberty,
He leaps inclosure, bounds into the world!
The world is taken, after ten years toil,
Like antient *Troy*; and all its joys his own.
Alas! the world's a tutor more severe;
Its lessons hard, and ill deserve his pains;
Unteaching All his virtuous nature taught,
Or books (fair virtue's advocates!) inspir'd.
For who receives him into public life?
Men of the world the terræ-filial breed,
Welcome the modest stranger to their sphere,
(Which glitter'd long, at distance, in his sight)
And, in their hospitable arms inclose:
Men, who think nought so strong of the romance.

So rank knight-errant, as a real friend:
Men, that act up to *reason*'s golden rule,
All weakness of *affection* quite subdu'd:
Men, that would blush at being *thought* sincere,
And feign, for glory, the *few* faults they want;
That love a lye, where truth would pay as well;
As if to Them, *vice* shone her own reward.
LORENZO! canst thou bear a shocking sight?
Such, for FLORELLO's sake, 'twill now appear:
See, the steel'd files of season'd veterans,
Train'd to the world, in burnisht falshood bright;
Deep in the fatal stratagems of peace;
All soft sensation, in the throng, rubb'd off;
All their keen purpose, in politeness, sheath'd;
His friends eternal—during interest;
His foes implacable—when worth their while;
At war with ev'ry welfare, but their own;
As wise as LUCIFER; and half as good;
And by whom none, but LUCIFER, can gain—
Naked, thro' These (so common fate ordains),
Naked of heart, his cruel course he runs,
Stung out of All, most amiable in life,
Prompt truth, and open thought, and smiles unfeign'd;
Affection, as his species, wide diffus'd;
Noble presumptions to mankind's renown;
Ingenuous trust, and confidence of love.
These claims to joy (if mortals joy might claim)
Will cost him many a sigh; till time, and pains,
From the slow mistress of this school, *Experience*,
And her assistant, pausing, pale, *Distrust*,

Purchase a dear-bought clue to lead his youth
Thro' serpentine obliquities of life,
And the dark labyrinth of human hearts.
And happy! if the clue ſhall come so cheap:
For, while we learn to fence with public guilt,
Full oft we feel its foul contagion too,
If less than heav'nly virtue is our guard.
Thus, a strange kind of curst necessity
Brings down the ſterling temper of his soul,
By base alloy, to bear the current stamp,
Below call'd wisdom; sinks him into safety;
And brands him into credit with the *world*;
Where specious titles dignify disgrace,
And nature's injuries are arts of life;
Where brighter reason prompts to bolder crimes;
And heav'nly talents make infernal hearts;
That unsurmountable extreme of guilt!
Poor MACHIAVEL! who labour'd hard his plan,
Forgot, that genius need not go to school;
Forgot, that man, without a tutor wise,
His plan had practis'd, long before 'twas writ.
The world's all *title-page*; there's no *contents*;
The world's all *face*; the man who shews his *heart*,
Is whooted for his nudities, and scorn'd.
A man I knew, who liv'd upon a smile;
And well it fed him; he look'd plump and fair;
While rankeſt venom foam'd thro' every vein.
LORENZO! what I tell thee, take not ill!
Living, he fawn'd on ev'ry *fool* alive;
And, dying, curs'd the *friend* on whom he liv'd.

To such proficients thou art half a saint.
In foreign realms (for thou hast travell'd far)
How curious to contemplate two state rooks,
Studious their nests to feather in a trice,
With all the *necromantics* of their art,
Playing the game of *faces* on each other,
Making court sweet-meats of their latent gall,
In foolish hope, to steal each other's trust;
Both cheating, both exulting, both deceiv'd;
And, sometimes, both (let earth rejoice) undone!
Their parts we doubt not; but be that their shame:
Shall men of talents, fit to rule mankind,
Stoop to mean wiles, that would disgrace a fool;
And lose the thanks of those few friends they serve?
For who can thank the man, he cannot *see?*
Why so much cover? It defeats itself.
Ye that know all things! know ye not, mens hearts
Are therefore known, *because* they are conceal'd?
For why conceal'd?—The cause they need not tell.
I give him joy, that's aukward at a lie;
Whose feeble nature *truth* keeps still in awe;
His incapacity is his renown.
'Tis great, 'tis manly, to disdain *disguise*;
It shews our spirit, or it proves our strength.
Thou say'st, 'Tis *needful:* Is it therefore *right*?
Howe'er, I grant it some small sign of grace,
To strain at an excuse: And wouldst thou then
Escape that cruel *need?* Thou may'st, with ease;
Think no post *needful* that demands a knave.

When late our civil helm was shifting hands,
So P—— thought: Think better, if you can.
But this, how rare! the public path of life
Is dirty:—Yet, allow that dirt its due,
It makes the noble mind more noble still:
The world's no neuter; it will wound or save;
Or virtue quench, or indignation fire.
You say, The world, well-known, will make a *man*:
The world, well-known, will give our hearts to heaven
Or make us *dæmons*, long before we die.
To shew how fair the world, *thy* mistress, shines,
Take either part, sure ills attend the choice;
Sure, tho' not equal, detriment ensues.
Not *virtue*'s self is deify'd on earth;
Virtue has her relapses, conflicts, foes;
Foes that ne'er fail to make her feel their hate.
Virtue has her peculiar set of pains.
True friends to virtue, *last*, and *least*, complain,
But if *they* sigh, can *others* hope to smile?
If *wisdom* has her miseries to mourn,
How can poor *folly* lead a happy life?
And if *both* suffer, what has earth to boast,
Were he *most* happy, who the *least* laments?
Where *much*, *much* patience, the most envy'd state,
And *some* forgiveness, needs, the best of friends?
For friend, or happy life, who looks not higher,
Of neither shall he find the shadow *here*.
The world's sworn advocate, without a fee,
Lorenzo smartly, with a smile, replies;
"Thus far thy song is right; and All must own,

" Virtue *has her peculiar set of pains.*—
" And *joys peculiar* who to *vice* denies?
" If vice it is, with nature to comply:
" If *pride*, and *sense* are so predominant,
" To *check*, not *overcome*, them, makes a saint.
" Can nature in a plainer voice proclaim
" *Pleasure*, and *glory*, the chief good of man?"
Can *pride*, and *sensuality*, rejoice?
From purity of thought, all *pleasure* springs;
And, from an humble spirit, all our *peace*.
Ambition, Pleasure! let us talk of These:
Of These, the PORCH, and ACADEMY, talk'd;
Of These, each following age had much to say:
Yet, unexhausted, still, the needful theme.
Who talks of *these*, to mankind all at once
He talks; for where the saint from either free?
Are These thy refuge?—No: these rush upon thee;
Thy vitals seize, and *vulture*-like, devour;
I'll try, if I can pluck thee from thy rock,
PROMETHEUS! from this barren ball of earth;
If *reason* can unchain thee, thou art free.
And, first, thy *Caucasus*, ambition, calls;
Mountain of torments! eminence of woes!
Of courted woes! and courted thro' mistake!
'Tis not ambition charms thee; 'tis a cheat
Will make thee start, as *H*—— at his *Moor*.
Dost grasp at greatness? First, know what it is:
Think'st thou thy greatness in *distinction* lies?
Not in the feather, wave it e'er so high,
By *fortune* stuck, to mark us from the throng,

Is glory lodg'd: 'Tis lodg'd in the reverse;
In that which joins, in that which equals, All,
The monarch and his slave;—"A deathless soul,
"Unbounded prospect, and immortal kin,
"A Father God, and brothers in the skies;"
Elder, indeed, in time; but less remote
In excellence, perhaps, than thought by man;
Why greater what can fall, than what can rise?
If still delirious, now, LORENZO! go;
And with thy full-blown brothers of the *world*,
Throw scorn around thee: cast it on thy slaves;
Thy slaves, and equals: How scorn cast on Them
Rebounds on Thee! If man is mean, as man,
Art thou a god? If *fortune* makes him so,
Beware the consequence: A maxim That,
Which draws a monstrous picture of mankind,
Where, in the drapery, the *man* is lost;
Externals flutt'ring, and the soul forgot.
Thy greatest glory, when dispos'd to boast,
Boast *that* aloud, in which thy servants share.
We wisely strip the steed we mean to buy:
Judge we, in their caparisons, of *men*?
It nought avails thee, *where*, but *what*, thou art;
All the distinctions of this little life
Are quite cutaneous, foreign to the man,
When, thro' death's streights, *earth*'s subtle serpents creep,
Which wriggle into wealth, or climb renown.
As crooked *Satan* the forbidden tree,
They leave their party-colour'd robe behind,
All that now glitters, while they rear aloft

Their brazen crests, and hiss at us below.
Of fortune's *fucus* strip them, yet alive;
Strip them of body, too; nay, closer still,
Away with all, but *moral*, in their minds;
And let, what then remains, impose their name,
Pronounce them Weak, or Worthy; Great or Mean.
How mean that snuff of glory *fortune* lights,
And *death* puts out! Dost thou demand a test,
A test, at once, infallible, and short,
Of *real* Greatness? That man greatly lives,
Whate'er his fate, or fame, who greatly dies;
High-flush'd with hope, where heroes shall despair.
If *this* a true criterion, many courts,
Illustrious, might afford but few grandees.
The Almighty, from his throne, on earth surveys
Nought Greater, than an honest, Humble Heart;
An Humble Heart, *His* residence! pronounc'd
His second seat; and rival to the skies.
The private path, the secret acts of men,
If noble, far the noblest of our lives!
How far above LORENZO's glory sits
Th' illustrious master of a name *unknown*?
Whose worth unrivall'd, and unwitness'd, loves
Life's sacred shades, where Gods converse with men;
And *peace*, beyond the world's conceptions, smiles!
As thou (now dark), before we part, shalt see.
But thy Great Soul this *skulking* glory scorns.
LORENZO's sick, but when LORENZO's seen;
And, when he shrugs at public bus'ness, lyes.
Deny'd the public eye, the public voice,

As if he lived on others' breath, he dies.
Fain would he make the world his pedestal;
Mankind the gazers, the sole figure, He.
Knows he, that mankind praise against their will,
And mix as much detraction as they can?
Knows he, that faithless *fame* her whisper has,
As well as trumpet? That his vanity
Is so much tickled from not hearing *All?*
Knows this all knower, that from itch of praise,
Or, from an itch more sordid, when he shines,
Taking his country by five hundred ears,
Senates at once admire him, and despise,
With modest laughter lining loud applause,
Which makes the smile more mortal to his fame?
His *fame*, which (like the mighty CÆSAR), crown'd
With laurels, in full senate, greatly falls,
By *seeming* friends, that honour, and destroy.
We rise in glory, as we sink in pride:
Where boasting ends, there dignity begins:
And yet, mistaken beyond all mistake,
The blind LORENZO's proud—of being proud;
And dreams himself ascending in his fall.
An eminence, tho' fancy'd, turns the brain:
All vice wants *hellebore;* but of all vice,
Pride loudest calls, and for the largest bowl;
Because, unlike all other vice, it flies,
In *fact*, the point, in *fancy* most pursu'd.
Who court applause, oblige the world in *this;*
They gratify man's passion to *refuse.*
Superior honour, when *assum'd*, is *lost;*

Ev'n good men turn *banditti*, and rejoice,
Like KOULI-KAN, in plunder of the proud.
Tho' somewhat disconcerted, steady still
To the *world*'s cause, with half a face of joy,
LORENZO cries—" Be, then, *ambition* cast;
" Ambition's dearer far stands unimpeach'd,
" Gay *pleasure!* proud *ambition* is her slave;
" For Her, he soars at *great*, and hazards *ill;*
" For Her, he fights, and bleeds, or overcomes;
" And paves his way with crowns, to reach Her smile:
" Who can resist her charms?"—Or, *should?* LORENZO!
What mortal shall resist, where angels yield?
Pleasure's the mistress of ethereal powers;
For her contend the rival gods above;
Pleasure's the mistress of the world below;
And well it was for man, that *pleasure* charms;
How would All stagnate, but for *pleasure*'s ray!
How would the frozen stream of action cease!
What is the pulse of this so busy world?
The love of *pleasure:* That, thro' ev'ry vein,
Throws motion, warmth; and shuts out death from life.
Tho' various are the tempers of mankind,
Pleasure's gay family hold All in chains:
Some most affect the black: and some, the fair;
Some honest *pleasure* court; and some, obscene.
Pleasures *obscene* are various, as the throng
Of passions, that can *err* in human hearts;
Mistake their objects, or transgress their bounds.
Think you there's but one whoredom? Whoredom, All,
But when our *reason* licenses delight.

Dost doubt, LORENZO? Thou shalt doubt no more.
Thy father chides thy gallantries; yet hugs
An ugly, common harlot, in the dark;
A rank adulterer with others *gold!*
And that hag, *vengeance*, in a corner, charms.
Hatred her brothel has, as well as *love*,
Where horrid *epicures* debauch in blood.
Whate'er the motive, *pleasure* is the mark:
For Her, the black assassin draws his sword;
For Her, dark statesmen trim their midnight lamp,
To which no *single* sacrifice may fall;
For Her, the saint abstains; the miser starves;
The *Stoic* proud, for *pleasure*, pleasure scorn'd;
For Her, *affliction*'s daughters grief indulge,
And find, or hope, a luxury in tears;
For Her, guilt, shame, toil, danger, we defy;
And, with an aim *voluptuous*, rush on death.
Thus universal her despotic power!

And as her empire wide, her praise is just.
Patron of pleasure! doater on delight!
I am thy rival; pleasure I profess;
Pleasure the purpose of my gloomy song.
Pleasure is nought but virtue's gayer name;
I wrong her still, I rate her worth too low;
Virtue the root, and pleasure is the flower;
And honest EPICURUS' foes were fools.

But this sounds harsh, and gives the *wise* offence;
If o'erstrain'd wisdom still retains the *name*.
How knits *austerity* her cloudy brow,
And blames, as bold, and hazardous, the *praise*

Of *pleasure*, to mankind, *unprais'd*, too dear!
Ye modern *Stoics!* hear my soft reply;
Their senses men *will* trust: We can't impose;
Or, if we could, is imposition right?
Own *honey sweet;* but, owning, add this *sting*;
"When mixt with poison, it is deadly too."
Truth never was indebted to a lie.
Is nought but *virtue* to be prais'd, as good?
Why then is health preferr'd before disease?
What nature loves *is* good, without *our* leave.
And where no future drawback cries, "*Beware*;"
Pleasure, tho' not from virtue, *should* prevail.
'Tis balm to life, and gratitude to heaven;
How cold our thanks for bounties unenjoy'd!
The *love of pleasure* is man's eldest-born,
Born in his cradle, living to his tomb;
Wisdom, her *younger* sister, tho' more *grave*,
Was meant to *minister*, and not to mar,
Imperial *pleasure*, queen of human hearts.
LORENZO! Thou, her majesty's renown'd,
Tho' uncoift, counsel, learned in *the world!*
Who think'st thyself a MURRAY, with disdain
May'st look on me. Yet, my DEMOSTHENES!
Canst thou plead *pleasure*'s cause as well as I?
Know'st thou her *nature, purpose, parentage?*
Attend my song, and thou shalt know them all;
And know Thyself; and know thyself to be
(Strange truth!) the most abstemious man alive.
Tell not CALISTA; she will laugh thee dead;
Or send thee to her hermitage with L——.

Absurd presumption! Thou who never knew'st
A serious thought! shalt thou dare dream of joy?
No man ere found a *happy life* by chance;
Or yawn'd it into being, with a wish;
Or, with the snout of grov'ling *appetite*,
E'er smelt it out, and grubb'd it from the dirt.
An *art* it is, and must be learnt; and learnt,
With unremitting effort, or be lost;
And leaves us perfect blockheads, in our bliss,
The clouds may drop down titles and estates;
Wealth may seek Us; but *wisdom* must be sought;
Sought before all; but (how unlike all else,
We seek on earth!) 'tis never sought in vain.
First, *pleasure*'s birth, rise, strength, and grandeur, see
Brought forth by *wisdom*, nurst by *discipline*,
By *patience* taught, by *perseverance* crown'd,
She rears her head majestic; round her throne,
Erected in the bosom of the just,
Each virtue, listed, forms her manly guard.
For what are *virtues*? (Formidable name!)
What, but the fountain, or defence, of joy?
Why, then, commanded? Need mankind commands,
At once to *merit*, and to *make*, their bliss?—
Great Legislator! scarce so great, as kind!
If men are rational, and love delight,
Thy gracious law but flatters human choice;
In the transgression lies the penalty;
And they the most indulge, who most obey.

Of *pleasure*, next, the final cause explore:
Its mighty *purpose*, its important *end*.
Not to turn *human* brutal, but to build
Divine on human *pleasure* came from heaven.
In aid to *reason* was the goddess sent;
To call up all its strength by such a charm.
Pleasure, first, succours *virtue*; in return,
Virtue gives *pleasure* an eternal reign.
What, but the pleasure of food, friendship, faith,
Supports life *natural*, *civil*, and *divine*?
'Tis from the pleasure of repast, we live;
'Tis from the pleasure of applause, we please;
'Tis from the pleasure of belief, we pray.
(All pray'r would cease, if unbeliev'd the prize):
It serves ourselves, our species, and our God;
And to serve more, is past the sphere of man.
Glide, then, for ever, pleasure's sacred stream!
Through *Eden*, as *Euphrates* ran, it runs,
And fosters ev'ry growth of happy life;
Makes a new *Eden* where it flows;—but such
As *must* be lost, LORENZO! by thy fall.
"*What mean I by thy fall?*"—Thou'lt shortly see,
While pleasure's *nature* is at large display'd;
Already sung her *origin*, and *ends*.
Those glorious ends, by kind, or by degree,
When *pleasure* violates, 'tis then a vice.
A vengeance too; it hastens into pain.
From due refreshment, life, health, reason, joy;
From wild excess, pain, grief, distraction, death;
Heav'n's justice *this* proclaims, and *that* her love.

What greater evil can I wish my foe,
Than his full draught of pleasure, from a cask
Unbroach'd by *just authority*, ungaug'd
By *temperance*, by *reason* unrefin'd?
A thousand dæmons lurk within the lee.
Heav'n, others, and ourselves! uninjur'd *these*,
Drink deep; the deeper, then, the more divine;
Angels are angels, from indulgence *there*;
'Tis unrepenting pleasure makes a god.
Dost think thyself a god from other joys?
A victim rather! shortly sure to bleed.
The wrong *must* mourn: Can heav'n's appointments fail;
Can man outwit Omnipotence? strike out
A self-wrought happiness unmeant by *Him*
Who made us, and the world we would enjoy?
Who forms an instrument, ordains from whence
Its dissonance, or harmony, shall rise.
Heav'n bid the soul this mortal frame inspire;
Bid virtue's ray divine inspire the soul
With unprecarious flows of vital joy;
And, without breathing, man as well might hope
For life, as without piety, for peace.
"Is *virtue*, then, and *piety* the same?"—
No; piety is more; 'tis virtue's source;
Mother of ev'ry worth, as that of joy.
Men of the world this doctrine ill digest;
They smile at piety; yet boast aloud
Good will to men; nor know they strive to part
What *nature* joins; and thus confute themselves.

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Engraved by J. Saunders

Prayr ardent opens heaven, lets down a stream
Of Glory on the consecrated hour
Of Man, in audience with the Deity Page. 230

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With *piety* begins all good on earth;
'Tis the first-born of rationality.
Conscience, her first law broken, wounded lies;
Enfeebled, lifeless, impotent to good;
A feign'd affection bounds her utmost power.
Some we can't love, but for th' Almighty's sake:
A foe to God was ne'er true friend to man;
Some sinister intent taints all he does;
And, in his kindest actions, he's unkind.
On piety, humanity is built;
And, on humanity, much happiness;
And yet still more on piety itself.
A soul in commerce with her God, is heaven;
Feels not the tumults and the shocks of life;
The whirls of passions, and the strokes of heart.
A Deity believ'd, is joy begun;
A Deity ador'd, is joy advanc'd;
A Deity belov'd, is joy matur'd.
Each branch of *piety* delight inspires;
Faith builds a bridge from this world to the next,
O'er death's dark gulph, and all its horror hides;
Praise, the sweet exhalation of our joy,
That joy exalts, and makes it sweeter still;
Pray'r ardent opens heav'n, lets down a stream
Of glory on the consecrated hour
Of man, in audience with the Deity.
Who worships the *Great God*, that instant joins
The first in heav'n, and sets his foot on hell.
Lorenzo! when wast Thou at church *before*?
Thou think'st the service long: But is it just?

Tho' just, unwelcome: Thou hadst rather tread
Unhallow'd ground; the muse, to win thine ear,
Must take an air less solemn. She complies.
Good conscience! at the sound *the world* retires;
Verse disaffects it, and LORENZO smiles;
Yet has she her *seraglio* full of charms;
And such as age shall heighten, not impair.
Art thou dejected? Is thy mind o'ercast?
Amid her fair ones, thou the fairest chuse,
To chase thy gloom.— "Go, fix some weighty *truth;*
"Chain down some *passion;* do some *gen'rous good;*
"Teach *ignorance* to see, or *grief* to smile;
"Correct thy *friend;* befriend thy greatest *foe;*
"Or with warm heart, and confidence divine,
"Spring up, and lay strong hold on *Him* who made
"thee."
Thy gloom is scatter'd, sprightly spirits flow;
Tho' wither'd is thy vine, and harp unstrung.
Dost call the bowl, the viol, and the dance,
Loud mirth, mad laughter? Wretched comforters!
Physicians! more than half of thy disease.
Laughter, tho' never censur'd yet as sin,
(Pardon a thought that only *seems* severe)
Is half-immoral: Is it much indulg'd?
By venting spleen, or dissipating thought,
It shews a *scorner*, or it makes a *fool*;
And sins, as hurting others, or ourselves.
'Tis *pride* or *emptiness*, applies the straw,
That tickles little minds to mirth effuse;
Of grief approaching, the portentous sign!

The house of laughter makes a house of woe.
A man *triumphant* is a monstrous sight;
A man *dejected* is a sight as mean.
What cause for *triumph*, where such ills abound?
What for *dejection*, where presides a Power,
Who call'd us into being to be blest?
So grieve, as conscious, grief may rise to joy;
So joy as conscious, joy to grief may fall.
Most true, a wise man never will be sad;
But neither will sonorous, bubbling mirth,
A shallow stream of happiness betray:
Too happy to be sportive, he's serene.
Yet wouldst thou laugh (but at thy own expence),
This counsel strange should I presume to give—
"Retire, and read thy *Bible*, to be gay."
There truths abound of sov'reign aid to peace;
Ah! do not prize them less, because inspir'd,
As thou, and thine, are apt and proud to do.
If *not* inspir'd, that pregnant page had stood,
Time's treasure! and the wonder of the wise!
Thou think'st, perhaps, thy *soul* alone at stake;
Alas!—should men mistake thee for a *fool*;—
What man of taste for genius, wisdom, truth,
Tho' tender of thy fame, could interpose?
Believe me, sense, *here*, acts a double part,
And the true *critic* is a *Christian* too.
But *these*, thou think'st, are gloomy paths to joy.—
True joy in sunshine ne'er was found at first;
They, first, themselves offend, who greatly please;
And travel only gives us sound repose.

Heav'n *sells* all pleasure; effort is the price;
The joys of conquest, are the joys of man:
And *glory* the victorious *laurel* spreads
O'er *pleasure*'s pure, perpetual, placid stream.
There is a time, when toil must be preferr'd,
Or joy, my mis-tim'd fondness is undone.
A man of *pleasure*, is a man of *pains*.
Thou wilt not take the trouble to be blest.
False joys, indeed, are born from want of thought;
From thoughts full bent, and energy, the *true*;
And that demands a mind in equal poise,
Remote from gloomy grief, and glaring joy.
Much joy not only speaks small happiness,
But happiness that shortly must expire.
Can joy, unbottom'd in reflection, stand?
And, in a tempest, can reflection live?
Can joy, like thine, secure itself an hour?
Can joy, like thine, meet accident unshock'd?
Or ope the door to honest poverty?
Or talk with threat'ning death, and not turn pale?
In such a world, and such a nature, *these*
Are needful fundamentals of delight:
These fundamentals give delight *indeed*;
Delight, pure, delicate, and durable;
Delight, unshaken, masculine, divine;
A constant, and a sound, but *serious* joy.
Is joy the daughter of severity?
It is:—Yet far my doctrine from severe.
"Rejoice for ever:" It becomes a man;
Exalts, and sets him nearer to the gods.

" Rejoice for ever!" *Nature* cries, " Rejoice;"
And drinks to man in her nectareous cup,
Mixt up of delicates for ev'ry sense;
To the great Founder of the bounteous feast,
Drinks glory, gratitude, eternal praise;
And he that will not *pledge her*, is churl.
Ill firmly to support, *good* fully taste,
Is the whole science of felicity:
Yet *sparing pledge: Her* bowl is not the best
Mankind can boast.—" A rational repast;
" Exertion, vigilance, a mind in arms,
" A military discipline of thought,
" To foil *temptation* in the doubtful field;
" And ever-waking ardor for *the right.*"
'Tis *these*, first, give, then guard, a chearful heart.
Nought that is *right*, think little; well aware,
What reason bids, GOD bids; by *His* command
How aggrandiz'd, the smallest thing we do!
Thus, *nothing* is insipid to the wise;
To thee, insipid all but what is *mad*;
Joys season'd high, and tasting strong of guilt.
" *Mad!* (thou reply'st, with indignation fir'd)
" Of antient sages proud to tread the steps,
" I follow *nature.*"—Follow *nature* still,
But look it be thine *own:* Is *conscience*, then,
No part of nature? Is she not *supreme?*
Thou regicide! O raise her from the dead!
Then, follow nature; and resemble GOD.

When, spite of *conscience*, pleasure is pursu'd,
Man's nature is unnaturally pleas'd:

And what's unnatural, is painful too
At intervals, and must disgust ev'n Thee!
The *fact* thou know'st; but not, perhaps, the *cause*.
Virtue's foundations with the world's were laid;
Heav'n mixt her with our make, and twisted close
Her sacred int'rests with the strings of life.
Who breaks her awful mandate, shocks himself,
His better self: And is it greater pain,
Our *soul* should murmur, or our *dust* repine?
And one, in their eternal war, *must* bleed.
If one *must* suffer, which should least be spar'd?
The pains of mind surpass the pains of sense:
Ask, then, the gout, what torment is in guilt.
The joys of *sense* to mental joys are mean:
Sense on the present only feeds; the soul
On past, and future, forages for joy.
'Tis hers, by retrospect, thro' *time* to range;
And forward *time*'s great sequel to survey.
Could human courts take vengeance on the *mind*,
Axes might rust, and racks, and gibbets, fall:
Guard, then, thy mind, and leave the rest to fate.
Lorenzo! wilt thou never be a man?
The man is dead, who for the body lives,
Lur'd by the beating of his pulse, to list
With ev'ry lust, that wars against his peace;
And sets him quite at variance with himself.
Thyself, first, know; then love: A *self* there is
Of virtue fond, that kindles at her charms.
A *self* there is, as fond of ev'ry vice,
While ev'ry virtue wounds it to the heart:

Humility degrades it, *justice* robs,
Blest *bounty* beggars it, fair *truth* betrays,
And god-like *magnanimity* destroys.
This self, when rival to the former, scorn:
When not in competition, kindly treat,
Defend it, feed it:—But when virtue bids,
Toss it, or to the fowls, or to the flames.
And why? 'Tis love of *pleasure* bids thee bleed!
Comply, or own self-love *extinct*, or *blind*.
For what is *vice*? Self-love in a mistake:
A poor blind merchant buying joys too dear.
And *virtue*, what? 'Tis self-love in her wits,
Quite skilful in the market of delight.
Self-love's good sense is love of that dread Power,
From whom herself, and all she can enjoy.
Other self-love is but disguis'd self-hate;
More mortal than the malice of our foes;
A self-hate, *now*, scarce felt; *then* felt full-sore,
When being, curst: extinction, loud implor'd;
And ev'ry thing preferr'd to what we *are*.
Yet *this* self-love LORENZO makes his choice;
And, in this choice triumphant, boasts of joy.
How is his want of happiness betray'd,
By disaffection to the present hour!
Imagination wanders far afield:
The future pleases: Why? The present pains.—
"But that's a *secret*." Yes, which all men know;
And know from Thee, discover'd unawares.
Thy ceaseless agitation, restless roll
From cheat to cheat, impatient of a pause;

What is it?—'Tis the cradle of the soul,
From *instinct* sent, to rock her in disease,
Which her physician, *Reason*, will not cure.
A poor expedient! yet thy best! and while
It mitigates thy pain, it *owns* it too.
Such are LORENZO's wretched remedies!
The weak have remedies; the wise have joys.
Superior wisdom is superior bliss.
And what sure mark distinguishes the wise?
Consistent wisdom ever wills the same;
Thy fickle wish is ever on the wing.
Sick of herself, is *folly*'s character;
As *wisdom*'s is, a modest self-applause.
A change of evils is *thy* good supreme;
Nor, but in motion, canst thou find thy rest.
Man's greatest strength is shewn in standing still.
The first sure symptom of a mind in health,
Is rest of heart, and pleasure felt at home.
False pleasure from abroad her joys imports;
Rich from within, and self-sustain'd, the *true*.
The *true* is fixt, and solid as a rock;
Slipp'ry the *false*, and tossing, as the wave.
This, a wild wanderer on earth, like CAIN;
That, like the fabled, self-enamour'd boy,
Home-contemplation her supreme delight;
She dreads an interruption from without,
Smit with her own condition; and the more
Intense she gazes, still it charms the more.
No man is happy, till he thinks, on earth
There breathes not a more happy than himself:

Then envy dies, and love o'erflows on All;
And love o'erflowing makes an angel Here.
Such angels, All, intitled to repose
On *Him*, who governs fate: Tho' tempest frowns,
Tho' nature shakes, how soft to lean on heaven!
To lean on *Him*, on whom archangels lean!
With inward eyes, and silent as the grave,
They stand collecting ev'ry beam of thought,
Till their hearts kindle with divine delight;
For all their thoughts, like angels seen of old
In ISRAEL'S dream, come from, and go to, heaven:
Hence, are *they* studious of sequestered scenes;
While noise, and dissipation, comfort *thee*.
  Were all men happy, revellings would cease,
That opiate for inquietude within.
LORENZO! never man was truly blest,
But it compos'd, and gave him such a cast,
As *folly* might mistake for want of joy.
A cast, unlike the triumph of the proud;
A modest aspect, and a smile at heart.
O for a joy from thy PHILANDER'S spring!
A spring perennial, rising in the breast,
And permanent as pure, no turbid stream
Of rapt'rous exultation, swelling high;
Which, like land floods, impetuous pour a while,
Then sink at once, and leave us in the mire.
What does the man, who transient joy prefers?
What, but prefer the bubbles to the stream?
  Vain are all sudden sallies of delight;
Convulsions of a weak, distemper'd joy.

Joy's a fixt state; a tenure, not a start.
Bliss there is none, but *unprecarious* bliss:
That is the gem: Sell All, and purchase That.
Why go a begging to contingencies,
Not gain'd with ease, nor safely lov'd, if gain'd?
At good fortuitous, draw back, and pause;
Suspect it; what thou canst ensure, enjoy;
And nought but what thou giv'st thyself, is sure.
Reason perpetuates joy that reason gives,
And makes it as immortal as herself:
To mortals, nought immortal, but their worth.
Worth, conscious worth! should *absolutely* reign;
And other joys ask leave for their approach;
Nor, unexamin'd, ever leave obtain.
Thou art all anarchy? a mob of joys
Wage war, and perish in intestine broils;
Not the least promise of internal peace;
No bosom-comfort! or unborrow'd bliss!
Thy thoughts are vagabonds; All outward-bound,
'Mid sands, and rocks, and storms, to cruise for pleasure;
If gain'd, dear-bought; and better miss'd than gain'd.
Much pain must expiate, what much pain procur'd.
Fancy, and *sense*, from an infected shore,
Thy cargo bring; and pestilence the prize.
Then, such thy thirst (insatiable thirst!)
By fond indulgence but inflam'd the more!
Fancy still cruises, when poor *sense* is tir'd.
Imagination is the *Paphian* shop,
Where feeble happiness, like VULCAN, lame,

Bids foul *ideas*, in their dark recess,
And hot as hell (which kindled the black fires),
With wanton art, those fatal arrows form,
Which murder all thy time, health, wealth, and fame.
Wouldst thou receive them, other thoughts there are,
On angel-wing, descending from above,
Which these, with art divine, would counter-work,
And form celestial armour for thy peace.
In *this* is seen imagination's *guilt*;
But who can count her *follies*? She betrays thee,
To think in grandeur there is something great.
For works of curious art, and antient fame,
Thy genius hungers, elegantly pain'd;
And foreign climes must cater for thy taste,
Hence, what disaster!—Tho' the price was paid,
That persecuting priest, the *Turk of Rome*,
Whose foot (ye gods!) tho' cloven, must be kiss'd,
Detain'd thy dinner on the *Latian* shore;
(Such is the fate of honest Protestants!)
And poor *magnificence* is starv'd to death.
Hence just resentment, indignation, ire!—
Be pacify'd, if *outward* things are great,
'Tis magnanimity great things to scorn;
Pompous expences, and parades august,
And courts, that insalubrious soil to peace.
True happiness ne'er enter'd at an eye;
True happiness resides in things unseen.
No smiles of *fortune* ever blest the bad,
Nor can her frowns rob *innocence* of joys;

That jewel wanting, triple crowns are poor:
So tell his *Holiness*, and be reveng'd.
Pleasure, we both agree, is man's chief good;
Our only contest, what deserves the name.
Give *pleasure*'s name to nought, but what has pass'd
Th' authentic seal of *reason* (which like YORKE,
Demurrs on what it passes), and defies
The tooth of time! when past, a pleasure still;
Dearer on trial, lovelier for its age,
And doubly to be priz'd, as it promotes
Our future, while it forms our present, joy.
Some joys the future overcast; and some
Throw all their beams that way, and gild the tomb.
Some joys endear eternity; some give
Abhorr'd annihilation dreadful charms.
Are rival joys contending for thy choice?
Consult thy *whole existence*, and be safe;
That oracle will put all doubt to flight.
Short is the lesson, tho' my lecture long,
Be good—and let heav'n answer for the rest.
Yet, with a sigh o'er all mankind, I grant
In this our day of proof, our land of hope,
The *good man* has his clouds that intervene;
Clouds, that *obscure* his sublunary day,
But never *conquer*: Ev'n the *best* must own,
Patience and *resignation*, are the pillars
Of human peace on earth. The pillars, These:
But those of SETH not more remote from Thee,
Till *this* heroic lesson thou hast learnt;
To frown at *pleasure*, and to smile in *pain*.

Fir'd at the prospect of unclouded bliss,
Heav'n in reversion, like the sun, as yet
Beneath th' horizon, chears us in this world;
It sheds, on souls susceptible of light,
The glorious dawn of our eternal day.
"This (says LORENZO) is a fair harangue:
" But can harangues blow back strong nature's stream;
" Or stem the tide heav'n pushes thro' our veins,
" Which sweeps away man's impotent resolves,
" And lays his labour level with the *world?*"
Themselves men make their comment on mankind:
And think nought *is*, but what they find at home:
Thus, weakness to chimæra turns the truth.
Nothing romantic has the muse prescrib'd.
* Above, LORENZO saw the man of earth,
The *mortal man;* and wretched was the sight.
To balance that, to comfort, and exalt,
Now see the *man immortal:* Him, I mean,
Who lives as such; whose heart, full-bent on heaven,
Leans all *that* way, his bias to the stars.
The world's dark shades, in contrast set, shall raise
His lustre more; tho' bright, without a foil:
Observe his awful portrait, and admire;
Nor stop at wonder: imitate, and live.
Some angel guide my pencil, while I draw,
What nothing less than angel can exceed!
A man on earth devoted to the skies;
Like ships in sea, while *in, above* the world.

* In a former Night.

With aspect mild, and elevated eye,
Behold him seated on a mount serene,
Above the fogs of *sense*, and *passion*'s storm;
All the black cares, and tumults, of this life,
Like harmless thunders, breaking at his feet,
Excite his pity, not impair his peace.
Earth's genuine sons, the sceptred, and the slave,
A mingled mob! a wand'ring herd! he sees,
Bewilder'd in the vale; in all unlike!
His full reverse in all; What higher praise?
What stronger demonstration of the right?
The present all *their* care; the future, *his*.
When public welfare calls, or private want,
They give to fame; his bounty *he* conceals.
Their virtues varnish nature; *his* exalt.
Mankind's esteem *they* court; and *he*, his own.
Theirs, the wild chace of *false* felicities;
His, the compos'd possession of the *true*.
Alike throughout is *his* consistent peace,
All of one colour, and an even thread;
While party-colour'd shreds of happiness,
With hideous gaps between, patch up for *them*
A madman's robe; each puff of *fortune* blows
The tatters by, and shews their nakedness.
He sees with other eyes than *theirs*: Where *they*
Behold a *sun*, *he* spies a *Deity*;
What makes *them* only smile, makes *him* adore.
Where *they* see *mountains*, *he* but *atoms* sees;
An *empire*, in *his* balance, weighs a *grain*.
They things terrestrial worship, as divine;

His hopes immortal blow them by, as dust,
That dims his sight, and shortens his survey,
Which longs, in Infinite, to lose all bound.
Titles and honours (if they prove his fate)
He lays aside to find his dignity;
No dignity *they* find in aught besides.
They triumph in externals (which conceal
Man's real glory), proud of an eclipse.
Himself too much *he* prizes to be proud,
And nothing thinks so great in man, as *man*.
Too dear *he* holds his int'rest, to neglect
Another's welfare, or his right invade;
Their int'rest, like a lion, lives on prey.
They kindle at the shadow of a wrong;
Wrong *he* sustains with temper, looks on heaven,
Nor stoops to think his injurer his foe;
Nought, but what wounds his virtue, wounds his peace.
A cover'd heart *their* character defends;
A cover'd heart *denies* him half his praise.
With nakedness his innocence agrees;
While *their* broad foliage testifies their fall:
Their no joys end, where *his* full feast begins:
His joys *create*, *Theirs* murder, future bliss.
To triumph in existence, *his* alone;
And *his* alone, triumphantly to think
His *true* existence is not yet begun.
His glorious course was, yesterday, complete;
Death, then, was welcome; yet life still is sweet.
But nothing charms LORENZO, like the firm,
Undaunted breast—And whose is that high praise?

They yield to pleasure, tho' they danger brave,
And shew no fortitude, but in the field?
If there they shew it, 'tis for glory shewn;
Nor will that cordial always man *their* hearts.
A cordial *his* sustains, that cannot fail;
By pleasure unsubdu'd, unbroke by pain,
He shares in that Omnipotence he trusts.
All-bearing, all-attempting, till he falls;
And when he falls, writes VICI on his shield.
From magnanimity, all *fear* above;
From nobler recompence, above *applause;*
Which owes to man's *short* out-look all its charms.
Backward to credit what he never felt,
LORENZO cries,—"Where shines this miracle?
"From what root rises this *immortal man?*"
A root that grows not in LORENZO's ground;
The root dissect, nor wonder at the *flower.*
He follows nature (not like * thee) and shews us
An uninverted system of a man.
His *appetite* wears *reason*'s golden chain,
And finds in due restraint, its luxury.
His *passion,* like an eagle well reclaim'd,
Is taught to fly at nought, but Infinite.
Patient his *hope,* un-anxious is his *care,*
His *caution* fearless, and his *grief* (if grief
The gods ordain) a stranger to despair.
And why?—Because affection, more than meet,
His wisdom leaves not disengag'd from heaven.
Those secondary goods that smile on earth,

* See page 89, line 24.

He, loving in *proportion*, loves in *peace*.
They most the world enjoy, who least admire.
His *understanding* 'scapes the common cloud
Of fumes, arising from a boiling breast.
His head is clear, because his heart is cool,
By worldly competitions uninflam'd.
The mod'rate movements of his soul admit
Distinct ideas, and matur'd debate,
An eye impartial, and an even scale;
Whence judgment sound, and unrepenting choice.
Thus, in a double sense, the *good* are wise;
On its own dunghill, wiser than the world.
What, then, the world? It *must* be doubly weak;
Strange truth! as soon would they believe their *Creed*.
Yet thus it is; nor otherwise *can* be;
So far from aught romantic, what I sing.
Bliss has no being, virtue has no strength,
But from the prospect of immortal life.
Who think earth all, or (what weighs just the same)
Who care no farther, *must* prize what it yields;
Fond of its fancies, proud of its parades.
Who thinks earth nothing, *can't* its charms admire;
He can't a foe, tho' most malignant, hate,
Because that hate would prove his greater foe.
'Tis hard for *them* (yet who so loudly boast
Good-will to men?) to love their dearest friend;
For may not he invade their *good supreme*,
Where the least jealousy turns love to gall?
All shines to *them*, that for a season shines.

Each act, each thought, *he* questions, " What its weight,
" Its colour what, a thousand ages hence?"
And what it *there* appears, he deems it *now*.
Hence, pure are the recesses of his soul.
The god-like man has nothing to conceal.
His virtue, constitutionally deep,
Has *Habit*'s firmness, and *affection*'s flame;
Angels, ally'd, descend to feed the fire;
And *death*, which others slays, makes him a god.
And now, LORENZO! bigot of this world!
Wont to disdain poor bigots caught by heaven!
Stand by thy *scorn*, and be reduc'd to *nought:*
For what art thou?—Thou boaster! while thy glare,
Thy gaudy grandeur, and mere worldly worth,
Like a broad mist, at distance, strikes us most;
And, like a mist, is nothing when at hand;
His merit, like a mountain, on approach,
Swells more, and rises nearer to the skies,
By promise *now*, and, by possession, *soon*,
(Too *soon*, too *much*, it cannot be) his own.
From this thy just *annihilation* rise,
LORENZO! rise to *something*, by reply.
The world, thy client, listens, and expects;
And longs to crown thee with immortal praise.
Canst thou be silent? No; for *wit* is thine;
And wit talks *most*, when *least* she has to say,
And *reason* interrupts not her career.
She'll say—*That mists above the mountains rise;*
And, with a thousand pleasantries, amuse;

She'll sparkle, puzzle, flutter, raise a dust,
And fly conviction, in the dust she rais'd.
Wit, how delicious to man's dainty taste!
'Tis precious, as the vehicle of *sense*;
But, as its substitute, a dire disease.
Pernicious talent; flatter'd by the world,
By the blind world, which thinks the talent rare.
Wisdom is rare, LORENZO! Wit abounds;
Passion can give it; sometimes *wine* inspires
The lucky flash; and *madness* rarely fails.
Whatever cause the spirit strongly stirs,
Confers the bays, and rivals thy renown.
For thy renown, 'twere well was this the worst;
Chance often hits it; and to pique thee more,
See *dulness*, blund'ring on vivacities,
Shakes her sage head at the calamity,
Which has expos'd, and let her down to thee.
But *wisdom*, awful wisdom! which inspects,
Discerns, compares, weighs, separates, infers,
Seizes the right, and holds it to the last;
How rare! In senates, synods, sought in vain;
Or if *there* found, 'tis sacred to the *few*;
While a lewd prostitute to multitudes,
Frequent, as fatal, *wit*: In civil life,
Wit makes an enterpriser; *sense*, a man.
Wit hates authority; commotion loves,
And thinks herself the lightning of the storm.
In *states*, 'tis dangerous; in *religion*, death:
Shall *wit* turn Christian, when the dull believe?
Sense is our *helmet*, *wit* is but the plume;

The *plume* exposes, 'tis our *helmet* saves.
Sense is the di'mond, weighty, solid, sound;
When cut by *wit*, it casts a brighter beam;
Yet, *wit* apart, it is a diamond still.
Wit, widow'd of *good sense*, is worse than nought;
It hoists more sail to run against a rock.
Thus, a *Half*-CHESTERFIELD is quite a fool;
Whom *dull* fools scorn, and bless their want of wit.
How ruinous the rock I warn thee shun,
Where *Sirens* sit, to sing thee to thy fate!
A *joy*, in which our *reason* bears no part,
Is but a *sorrow* tickling, ere it stings.
Let not the cooings of the world *allure* thee;
Which of her lovers ever found her true?
Happy! of this bad world who little know?—
And yet, we much must know her, to be *safe*,
To *know* the world, not *love* her, is thy point;
She gives but little, nor that little, long.
There is, I grant, a triumph of the pulse;
A dance of spirits, a mere froth of joy,
Our *thoughtless agitation*'s idle child,
That mantles high, that sparkles, and expires,
Leaving the soul more vapid than before.
An *animal* ovation! such as holds
No commerce with our *reason*, but subsists
On juices, thro' the well-ton'd tubes, well-strain'd;
A nice machine! scarce ever-tun'd aright;
And when it jars—thy *Sirens* sing no more,
Thy dance is done; the *demi-god* is thrown

(Short apotheosis!) beneath the *man*,
In coward gloom immers'd, or fell despair.
Art thou yet *dull enough* despair to dread,
And startle at destruction? If thou art,
Accept a buckler, take it to the field;
(A field of battle is this mortal life!)
When danger threatens, lay it on thy heart;
A single sentence proof against the *world*.
"*Soul, body, fortune!* Ev'ry good pertains
"To one of these; but prize not all alike;
"The goods of fortune to thy body's health,
"Body to soul, and soul submit to God."
Wouldst thou build lasting happiness? Do this;
Th' inverted *pyramid* can never stand.
Is this truth doubtful? It outshines the sun;
Nay, the sun shines not, but to shew us this,
The single lesson of mankind on earth.
And yet—Yet, what? No news! Mankind is mad!
Such mighty numbers list against the right,
(And what can't numbers, when bewitch'd, atchieve!)
They talk themselves to something like belief,
That all earth's joys are theirs: As *Athen*'s fool
Grinn'd from the port, on ev'ry sail his own.
They grin; but wherefore? And how long the laugh?
Half ignorance, their mirth; and half, a lie;
To cheat the world, and cheat themselves, they smile.
Hard either task! The most abandon'd own,
That *others*, if abandon'd, are undone:
Then, for themselves, the moment *reason* wakes,

(And Providence denies it long repose)
O how laborious is their gaiety!
They scarce can swallow their ebullient spleen,
Scarce muster patience to support the farce,
And pump sad laughter till the curtain falls.
Scarce, did I say? Some cannot sit it out;
Oft their own daring hands the curtain draw,
And shew us *what* their joy, by their despair.
The clotted hair! gor'd breast! blaspheming eye!
Its impious fury still alive in death!
Shut, shut the shocking scene.—But heav'n denies
A cover to such guilt; and so should man.
Look round, LORENZO! see the reeking blade,
Th' invenom'd phial, and the fatal ball;
The strangling cord, and suffocating stream;
The loathsome rottenness, and foul decays
From raging riot (slower suicides!)
And *pride* in these, more execrable still!
How horrid all to thought!—But horrors these,
That vouch the truth; and aid my feeble song.
From *vice*, *sense*, *fancy*, no man can be blest:
Bliss is too great, to lodge within an hour:
When an immortal being aims at bliss,
Duration is essential to the name.
O for a joy from *reason!* Joy from that,
Which makes man *man*; and, exercis'd aright,
Will make him *more*: A *bounteous* joy! that gives,
And promises; that weaves, with art divine,
The richest prospect into present peace:
A joy *ambitious!* Joy in common held

With thrones ethereal, and their greater far;
A joy high-privileg'd from chance, time, death!
A joy, which *death* shall double, *judgment* crown!
Crown'd higher, and still higher, at each stage,
Thro' blest eternity's long day; yet still,
Not more remote from *sorrow*, than from *Him*,
Whose lavish hand, whose love stupendous, pours
So much of Deity on guilty dust.
There, O my LUCIA! may I meet thee there,
Where not thy presence can improve my bliss!
Affects not this the *sages of the world?*
Can nought *affect* them, but what *fools* them too?
Eternity, depending on an hour,
Makes *serious thought* man's wisdom, joy, and praise,
Nor need you blush (tho' sometimes your designs
May shun the light) at your designs on heaven:
Sole point! where *over-bashful* is your blame.
Are you not *wise?*—You know you are: Yet hear
One truth, amid your num'rous schemes, mislaid,
Or overlook'd, or thrown aside, if seen;
" Our schemes to plan by *this* world, or the *next*,
" Is the sole difference between wise and fool."
All *worthy men* will weigh you in *this* scale;
What wonder then, if *they* pronounce you *light?*
Is *their* esteem alone not worth your care?
Accept my simple scheme of *common sense:*
Thus, save your fame, and make *two* worlds your own.
The world *replies* not;—but the world *persists;*
And puts the *cause* off to the longest day,
Planning evasions for the day of doom.

So far, at that *re-hearing*, from redress,
They then turn *witnesses* against themselves,
Hear that, LORENZO! Nor be wise to-morrow.
Haste, haste! A man, by nature, is in haste;
For who shall answer for another hour?
'Tis highly prudent, to make *one* sure friend;
And that thou canst not do, this side the skies.
Ye sons of earth! (nor *willing* to be more!)
Since *verse* you think from priestcraft somewhat free,
Thus, in an age so gay, the muse plain truths
(Truths, which, at church, you *might* have heard in prose)
Has ventur'd into light; well-pleas'd the verse
Should be forgot, if you the truths retain;
And crown her with your welfare, not your praise.
But *praise* she need not fear: I see my fate;
And headlong leap, like CURTIUS, down the gulph.
Since many an ample *volume*, mighty *tome*,
Must die; and die unwept; O thou minute
Devoted *page!* go forth among thy foes;
Go, nobly proud of martyrdom for truth,
And die a double death: Mankind incens'd,
Denies thee long to live: Nor shalt thou rest,
When thou art dead; in *Stygian* shades arraign'd
By LUCIFER, as traitor to his throne;
And bold blasphemer of his friend,—the WORLD;
The WORLD, whose legions cost him slender pay,
And *volunteers*, around his banner swarm;
Prudent, as PRUSSIA, in her zeal for GAUL.
"Are all, then, fools?" LORENZO cries.—Yes, all,
But such as hold *this* doctrine (new to thee);

"The mother of true wisdom is the *will*;"
The noblest *intellect*, a fool without it.
World-wisdom much has done, and more may do,
In arts and sciences, in wars, and peace;
But art and science, like thy wealth, will leave thee
And make thee twice a beggar at thy death.
This is the *most* indulgence can afford;—
"*Thy wisdom all can do, but—make thee wise.*"
Nor think this censure is severe on thee;
Satan, thy master, I dare call a dunce.

NIGHT THE NINTH AND LAST.

THE

CONSOLATION.

NIGHT THE NINTH AND LAST.

THE

CONSOLATION.

Containing, among other Things,

I. A MORAL SURVEY OF THE NOCTURNAL HEAVENS.
II. A NIGHT-ADDRESS TO THE DEITY.

HUMBLY INSCRIBED TO HIS GRACE

THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE,

One of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State.

..... *Fatis contraria fata rependens.* VIRG.

AS when a traveller, a long day past
In painful search of what he cannot find,
At night's approach content with the next cot,
There ruminates, a while, his labour lost:
Then chears his heart with what his fate affords,
And chants his sonnet to deceive the time,
Till the due season calls him to repose:
Thus I, long-travell'd in the ways of men,
And dancing, with the rest, the giddy maze,
Where *disappointment* smiles at *hope*'s career;
Warn'd by the languor of life's evening ray,

At length have hous'd me in an humble shed;
Where, future wand'ring banish'd from my thought,
And waiting, patient, the sweet hour of rest,
I chase the moments with a serious song.
Song sooths our pains; and age has pains to sooth.
When age, care, crime, and friends embrac'd at heart,
Torn from my bleeding breast, and *death*'s dark shade,
Which hovers o'er me, quench th' ethereal fire;
Canst thou, O *Night!* indulge one labour more?
One labour more indulge! then sleep, my strain!
Till, haply, wak'd by RAPHAEL's golden lyre,
Where night, death, age, care, crime, and sorrow cease;
To bear a part in everlasting lays;
Though far, far higher set, in aim, I trust,
Symphonious to this humble prelude *here*.
Has not the muse asserted *pleasures pure*,
Like those above; exploding other joys?
Weigh what was urg'd, LORENZO! fairly weigh;
And tell me, hast thou cause to triumph still?
I think, thou wilt forbear a boast so bold.
But if, beneath the favour of mistake,
Thy smile's sincere; not more sincere can be
LORENZO's smile, than my compassion for him.
The sick in *body* call for aid; the sick
In *mind* are covetous of more disease;
And when at *worst*, they dream themselves quite *well*.
To *know* ourselves diseas'd, is half our cure.
When *nature*'s blush by *custom* is wip'd off,

And conscience, deaden'd by repeated strokes,
Has into *manners* naturaliz'd our *crimes*;
The curse of curses is, our curse to love;
To triumph in the blackness of our guilt
(As *Indians* glory in the deepest jet),
And throw aside our *senses* with our *peace*.
But grant no guilt, no shame, no least alloy;
Grant joy and glory quite unsully'd shone;
Yet, still, it ill deserves LORENZO's heart.
No *joy*, no *glory*, glitters in thy sight,
But, through the thin partition of an hour,
I see its sables wove by *destiny*;
And *that* in sorrow bury'd; *this*, in shame;
While howling *furies* ring the doleful knell;
And *conscience*, now so soft thou scarce canst hear
Her whisper, echoes her eternal peal.
Where, the prime actors of the *last year*'s scene;
Their port so proud, their buskin, and their plume?
How many *sleep*, who kept the world *awake*
With lustre, and with noise! has *death* proclaim'd
A truce, and hung his sated lance on high?
'Tis brandish'd still; nor shall the *present year*
Be more tenacious of her human leaf,
Or spread of feeble life a thinner fall.
But needless *monuments* to wake the thought;
Life's *gayest* scenes speak man's mortality;
Though in a style more florid, full as plain,
As *mausoleums*, *pyramids*, and *tombs*.
What are our noblest ornaments, but *deaths*
Turn'd flatterers of life, in paint, or marble,

The well-stain'd canvas, or the featur'd stone?
Our fathers grace, or rather haunt, the scene.
Joy peoples her pavilion from the dead.
" *Profest diversions!* cannot these escape?—
Far from it: These present us with a shroud;
And talk of *death*, like garlands o'er a grave.
As some bold plunderers, for bury'd *wealth*,
We ransack tombs for *pastime;* from the dust
Call up the sleeping hero; bid him tread
The scene for our amusement: How like gods
We sit; and, wrapt in immortality,
Shed gen'rous tears on wretches born to die;
Their fate deploring, to forget *our own!*
What all the pomps and triumphs of our lives,
But legacies in blossom? our lean soil,
Luxuriant grown, and rank in vanities,
From friends interr'd beneath; a rich manure!
Like other worms, we banquet on the dead;
Like other worms, shall we crawl on, nor know
Our present frailties, or approaching fate?
Lorenzo! such the glories of the world!
What is the world itself? *Thy* world—A grave.
Where is the dust that has not been alive?
The spade, the plough, disturb our ancestors;
From human mould we reap our daily bread.
The globe around earth's hollow surface shakes,
And is the ceiling of her sleeping sons.
O'er devastation we blind revels keep;
Whole bury'd towns support the dancer's heel.
The *moist* of human frame the sun exhales;

Winds scatter through the mighty void the *dry;*
Earth repossesses part of what she gave,
And the freed spirit mounts on wings of fire;
Each element partakes our scatter'd spoils;
As nature, wide, our ruins spread: man's *death*
Inhabits all things, but the thought of man.
Nor man alone; his breathing bust expires,
His tomb is mortal; empires die: Where, now,
The *Roman? Greek?* They stalk, an empty name!
Yet few regard them in this useful light;
Though half our learning is *their* epitaph.
When down thy vale, unlockt by midnight thought,
That loves to wander in thy sunless realms,
O *death!* I stretch my view: what visions rise!
What triumphs! toils imperial! arts divine!
In wither'd laurels glide before my sight!
What lengths of far-fam'd ages, billow'd high
With human agitation, roll along
In unsubstantial images of air!
The melancholy ghosts of dead renown,
Whisp'ring faint echoes of the world's applause,
With penitential aspect, as they pass,
All point at earth, and hiss at human pride,
The wisdom of the *wise*, and prancings of the *great.*
But, O LORENZO! far the rest above,
Of ghastly nature, and enormous size,
One form assaults my sight, and chills my blood,
And shakes my frame. Of *one* departed world
I see the mighty shadow: Oozy wreath
And dismal sea-weed crown her; o'er her urn

Reclin'd, she weeps her desolated realms;
And bloated sons; and, weeping, prophesies
Another's dissolution, soon, in flames.
But, like CASSANDRA, prophesies in vain;
In vain, to many; not, I trust, to thee.
For, know'st thou not, or art thou *loath* to know,
The great decree, the counsel of the skies?
Deluge and *conflagration*, dreadful powers!
Prime ministers of vengeance! chain'd in caves
Distinct, apart the giant furies roar;
Apart; or, such their horrid rage for ruin,
In mutual conflict would they rise, and wage
Eternal war, till one was quite devour'd.
But not for *this*, ordain'd their boundless rage;
When heaven's inferior instruments of wrath,
War, *famine*, *pestilence*, are found too weak
To scourge a world for her enormous crimes,
These are let loose, alternate: Down they rush,
Swift and tempestuous, from th' eternal throne,
With irresistible commission arm'd,
The world, in vain corrected, to destroy,
And ease creation of the shocking scene.
Seest thou, LORENZO! what depends *on* man?
The *fate* of nature; as *for* man, her *birth*.
Earth's actors change earth's transitory scenes,
And make creation groan with human guilt.
How must it groan, in a new deluge whelm'd,
But not of waters! At the destin'd hour,
By the loud trumpet summon'd to the charge,
See, all the formidable sons of fire,

Eruptions, earthquakes, comets, lightnings, play
Their various engines; all at once disgorge
Their blazing magazines; and take, by storm,
This poor terrestrial citadel of man.
Amazing period! when each mountain-height
Out-burns *Vesuvius*; rocks eternal pour
Their melted mass, as rivers once they pour'd;
Stars rush; and final *ruin* fiercely drives
Her ploughshare o'er creation!—while aloft,
More than astonishment! if more *can* be!
Far other *firmament* than e'er was seen,
Than e'er was thought by man! far other *stars!*
Stars animate, that govern these of fire;
Far other *sun!*—A sun, O how unlike
The Babe at *Bethlem!* how unlike the Man,
That groan'd on *Calvary!*—Yet *He* it is;
That Man of sorrows! O how chang'd! what pomp!
In grandeur terrible, all heav'n descends!
And gods, ambitious, triumph in his train.
A swift archangel, with his golden wing,
As blots and clouds, that darken and disgrace
The scene divine, sweeps stars and suns aside.
And now, all dross remov'd, heav'n's own pure day,
Full on the confines of our æther, flames.
While (dreadful contrast!) far, how far beneath!
Hell, bursting, belches forth her blazing seas,
And storms sulphureous; her voracious jaws
Expanding wide, and roaring for her prey.
LORENZO! welcome to this scene; the last
In nature's course; the first in wisdom's thought.

This strikes, if aught can strike thee; *this* awakes
The most supine; *this* snatches man from death.
Rouse, rouse, LORENZO, then, and follow me,
Where truth, the most momentous man can hear,
Loud calls my soul, and ardor wings her flight.
I find my inspiration in my theme;
The grandeur of my subject is my muse.
At *midnight*, when mankind is wrapt in *peace*,
And worldly *fancy* feeds on golden dreams;
To give more dread to man's most dreadful hour,
At midnight, 'tis presum'd, this pomp will burst
From tenfold darkness; sudden as the spark
From smitten steel; from nitrous grain, the blaze.
Man, starting from his couch, shall sleep no more!
The day is broke, which never more shall close!
Above, around, beneath, amazement all!
Terror and glory join'd in their extremes!
Our GOD in grandeur, and our *world* on fire!
All nature struggling in the pangs of death!
Dost thou not hear her? Dost thou not deplore
Her strong convulsions, and her final groan?
Where are *we now?* Ah me! the ground is gone,
On which we stood; LORENZO! while thou may'st,
Provide more firm support, or sink for ever!
Where? how? from whence? vain hope! it is too late!
Where, where, for shelter, shall the guilty fly,
When consternation turns the *good man* pale?
Great day! for which all other days were made;
For which *earth* rose from *chaos*, man from *earth*;
And an eternity, the date of Gods,

Descended on poor earth-created man!
Great day of dread, decision, and despair!
At thought of thee each sublunary wish
Lets go its eager grasp, and drops the world;
And catches at each reed of hope in heaven.
At *thought* of thee!—and art thou *absent* then?
LORENZO! no; 'tis here; it is begun;—
Already is begun the grand assize,
In thee, in all: Deputed conscience scales
The dread tribunal, and forestalls our doom;
Forestalls; and, by forestalling, proves it *sure*.
Why on himself should man *void* judgment pass?
Is idle *nature* laughing at her sons?
Who *conscience* sent, her sentence will support,
And GOD above assert that GOD in man.
Thrice happy they! that enter *now* the court
Heav'n opens in their bosoms: But, how rare,
Ah me! that magnanimity, how rare!
What hero, like the man who stands himself;
Who dares to meet his naked heart alone;
Who hears, intrepid, the full charge it brings,
Resolv'd to silence future murmurs there?
The coward flies; and, flying, is undone.
(Art thou a coward? No:) The coward flies;
Thinks, but thinks slightly; asks, but fears to *know*;
Asks, "*What is truth;*" with PILATE; and retires;
Dissolves the court, and mingles with the throng;
Asylum sad! from reason, hope, and heav'n!
Shall all, but man, look out with ardent eye,
For that great day, which was ordain'd *for* man?

O day of consummation! mark supreme
(If men are wise) of human thought! nor least,
Or in the sight of angels, or their KING!
Angels, whose radiant circles, height o'er height,
Order o'er order, rising, blaze o'er blaze,
As in a theatre, surround this scene,
Intent on man, and anxious for his fate.
Angels look out for thee; for thee, their LORD,
To vindicate his glory; and for thee,
Creation universal calls aloud,
To dis-involve the *moral* world, and give
To *nature*'s renovation brighter charms.
Shall man alone, whose fate, whose *final* fate,
Hangs on that hour, exclude it from his thought?
I think of nothing else; I see! I feel it!
All *nature*, like an earthquake, trembling round!
All *Deities*, like summer's swarms, on wing!
All basking in the full meridian blaze!
I see the JUDGE inthron'd! the flaming guard!
The volume open'd! open'd ev'ry heart!
A sun-beam pointing out each secret thought!
No patron! intercessor none! now past
The sweet, the clement, mediatorial hour!
For guilt no plea! to pain, no pause! no bound!
Inexorable, all! and all, extreme!
Nor man alone; the foe of GOD and man,
From his dark den, blaspheming, drags his chain,
And rears his brazen front, with thunder scarr'd:
Receives his sentence, and *begins* his hell.
All vengeance *past*, now, seems abundant grace:

Like meteors in a stormy sky, how roll
His baleful eyes! he curses whom he dreads;
And deems it the first moment of his fall.
'Tis *present* to my thought!—and yet where is it?
Angels can't tell me; angels cannot *guess*
The *period*; from *created* beings lock'd
In darkness. But the *process*, and the *place*,
Are less obscure; for these may *man* enquire.
Say, thou great close of human hopes and fears!
Great key of hearts! great finisher of fates!
Great end! and great beginning! say, Where art thou?
Art thou in *time*, or in *eternity*?
Nor in *eternity*, nor *time*, I find thee.
These, as two monarchs, on their borders meet,
(Monarchs of all elaps'd, or unarriv'd!)
As in debate, how best their pow'rs ally'd,
May swell the grandeur, or discharge the wrath,
Of HIM, whom both their monarchies obey.
Time, this fast fabric for him built (and doom'd
With him to fall) *now* bursting o'er his head;
His lamp, the sun, extinguish'd; from beneath
The frown of hideous darkness, calls his sons
From their long slumber; from earth's heaving womb,
To second birth! contemporary throng!
Rous'd at One call, upstarted from one bed,
Prest in One croud, appall'd with One amaze,
He turns them o'er, *Eternity!* to *thee*.
Then (as a king depos'd disdains to live)
He falls on his own scythe; nor falls *alone*;

His greatest foe falls with him; *Time*, and he
Who murder'd all *time*'s offspring, *Death*, expire.
TIME was! ETERNITY now reigns alone:
Aweful Eternity! offended queen!
And her resentment to mankind, how just!
With kind intent, soliciting access,
How often has she knock'd at human hearts!
Rich to repay their hospitality,
How often call'd! and with the voice of GOD!
Yet bore repulse, excluded as a cheat!
A dream! while foulest foes found welcome *there!*
A dream, a cheat, *now*, all things, but *her* smile.
For, lo! her twice ten thousand gates thrown wide,
As thrice from *Indus* to the frozen pole,
With banners streaming as the *comet*'s blaze,
And clarions, louder than the *deep* in storms,
Sonorous as immortal breath can blow,
Pour forth their myriads, potentates, and powers,
Of light, of darkness; in a middle field,
Wide, as *creation!* populous, as wide!
A neutral region! there to mark th' event
Of that great drama, whose preceding scenes
Detain'd them close spectators, through a length
Of ages, rip'ning to this grand result;
Ages, as yet unnumber'd, but by GOD;
Who now, pronouncing sentence, vindicates
The rights of virtue, and his own renown.
ETERNITY, the various sentence past,
Assigns the sever'd throng distinct abodes,
Sulphureous, or ambrosial: What ensues?

The deed predominant! the deed of deeds!
Which makes a hell of hell, a heav'n of heav'n.
The *Goddess*, with determin'd aspect, turns
Her adamantine key's enormous size
Through destiny's inextricable wards,
Deep driving ev'ry bolt, on both their fates.
Then, from the crystal battlements of heaven,
Down, down, she hurls it through the dark profound,
Ten thousand thousand fathom; there to rust,
And ne'er unlock her resolution more.
The deep resounds, and hell, through all her glooms,
Returns, in groans, the melancholy roar.
O how unlike the chorus of the skies!
O how unlike those shouts of joy, that shake
The whole *ethereal!* how the concave rings!
Nor strange! when deities their voice exalt;
And louder far, than when *creation* rose,
To see *creation*'s godlike aim, and end,
So well accomplish'd! so divinely clos'd!
To see the mighty *dramatist*'s last act
(As meet) in glory rising o'er the rest.
No fancy'd GOD, a GOD, *indeed*, descends,
To solve all *knots*; to strike the *moral* home;
To throw full day on darkest scenes of *time*;
To clear, commend, exalt, and crown the whole.
Hence, in one peal of loud, eternal praise,
The charm'd spectators thunder their applause;
And the vast void beyond, applause resounds.
WHAT THEN AM I?—
Amidst applauding worlds,
And worlds celestial, is there found on earth,

A peevish, dissonant, rebellious string,
Which jars in the grand chorus, and *complains?*
Censure on *thee*, LORENZO! I suspend,
And turn it on *myself*; how greatly due!
All, all is *right*; by GOD ordain'd or done;
And who, but GOD, resum'd the friends *He* gave?
And have I been *complaining*, then, so long?
Complaining of his *favours*; *pain*, and *death?*
Who, without *pain*'s advice, would e'er be good?
Who, without *death*, but would be good in vain?
Pain is to save from *pain*; all punishment,
To make for *peace*; and death to save from *death*;
And second death, to guard immortal life;
To rouse the careless, the presumptuous awe,
And turn the tide of souls another way;
By the same tenderness divine ordain'd,
That planted *Eden*, and high-bloom'd for man,
A fairer *Eden*, endless, in the skies.

Heav'n gives us friends to bless the *present* scene;
Resumes them, to prepare us for the *next*.
All evils *natural* are *moral* goods;
All Discipline, *indulgence*, on the whole.
None are unhappy: *all* have cause to smile,
But such as to themselves that cause deny.
Our *faults* are at the bottom of our *pains*;
Error, in *acts*, or *judgment*, is the source
Of endless sighs: We *sin*, or we *mistake*;
And *nature* tax, when false *opinion* stings.
Let impious grief be banish'd, joy indulg'd;
But chiefly *then*, when grief puts in her claim.

Joy from the *joyous*, frequently betrays,
Oft lives in vanity, and dies in woe.
Joy, amidst *ills*, corroborates, exalts;
'Tis joy and conquest; joy and virtue too.
A noble fortitude in *ills*, delights
Heav'n, earth, ourselves; 'tis duty, glory, peace.
Affliction is the good man's shining scene;
Prosperity conceals his brightest ray;
As *night* to stars, *woe* lustre gives to man.
Heroes in battle, pilots in the storm,
And virtue in calamities, admire.
The crown of manhood is a winter-joy;
An evergreen, that stands the *Northern* blast,
And blossoms in the rigour of our fate.
'Tis a prime part of happiness, to know
How much unhappiness *must* prove our lot;
A part which few possess! I'll pay life's tax,
Without one rebel murmur, from this hour,
Nor think it misery to be a *man*;
Who think *it is*, shall never be a *God*.
Some ills we wish for, when we wish to live.
What spoke *proud passion?*—" * Wish my being lost?"
Presumptuous! blasphemous! absurd! and false!
The triumph of my soul is,—That I *am*;
And therefore that I *may* be—*what?* LORENZO!
Look inward, and look deep; and deeper still;
Unfathomably deep our treasure runs

* Referring to the first night.

In golden veins, through all eternity!
Ages, and ages, and succeeding still
New ages, *where* the phantom of an hour,
Which courts each night, dull slumber, for repair,
Shall wake, and wonder, and exult, and praise,
And fly through infinite, and all unlock;
And, (if deserv'd) by heav'n's redundant love,
Made half-adorable itself, adore;
And find, in adoration, endless joy!
Where thou, not master of a moment *here*,
Frail as the flow'r, and fleeting as the gale,
May'st boast a *whole eternity*, enrich'd
With all a *kind Omnipotence* can pour.
Since ADAM fell, no mortal, uninspir'd,
Has ever yet conceiv'd, or ever shall,
How kind is GOD, how great (if good) is MAN.
No man too largely from heav'n's love can hope,
If what is *hop'd* he labours to *secure*.
Ills?—there are none: *All-gracious!* none from *thee*;
From *man* full many! num'rous is the race
Of blackest ills, and those immortal too,
Begot by *madness* on fair *liberty;*
Heav'n's daughter, hell-debauch'd! *her* hand alone
Unlocks destruction to the sons of men,
First barr'd by *thine:* high-wall'd with adamant,
Guarded with terrors reaching to this world,
And cover'd with the thunders of thy law;
Whose threats are *mercies*, whose injunctions, *guides*,
Assisting, not restraining, *reason*'s choice;

Whose sanctions, *unavoidable results*
From nature's course, indulgently reveal'd;
If unreveal'd more dang'rous, nor less sure.
Thus, an indulgent father warns his sons,
" Do this; fly that"—nor always tells the cause;
Pleas'd to reward, as duty to his will,
A conduct needful to their own repose.
Great GOD of wonders! (if, thy *love* survey'd,
Aught else the name of wonderful retains)
What *rocks* are *these*, on which to build our trust!
Thy ways admit no blemish; none I find;
Or this alone—"*That none is to be found.*"
Not one, to soften *censure*'s hardy crime;
Not one, to palliate peevish *grief*'s COMPLAINT,
Who like a *dæmon*, murm'ring from the dust,
Dares into judgment call her Judge.—SUPREME!
For *all* I bless thee; most, for the *severe*;
* *Her* death—*my own* at hand—the fiery gulph,
That flaming bound of wrath omnipotent!
It thunders;—but it thunders to preserve;
It strengthens what it strikes; its wholesome dread
Averts the dreaded pain; its hideous groans
Join heav'n's sweet hallelujahs in thy praise,
Great Source of good *alone!* how kind in all!
In vengeance kind! *pain, death, gehenna*, SAVE.
Thus in thy world material, *Mighty Mind!*
Not that alone which *solaces*, and *shines*,
The *rough* and *gloomy*, challenges our praise.
The *winter* is as needful as the *spring*;

* LUCIA.

The *thunder*, as the sun; a stagnate mass
Of vapours breeds a pestilential air:
Nor more propitious the *Favonian* breeze
To nature's health, than purifying storms;
The dread *Volcano* ministers to good.
Its smother'd flames might undermine the world.
Loud *Ætnas* fulminate in love to man!
Comets good omens are, when duly scann'd;
And, in their use, *eclipses* learn to shine.
Man is responsible for *ills* receiv'd;
Those we call *wretched* are a chosen band,
Compell'd to refuge in the *right* for peace.
Amid my list of blessings infinite,
Stand this the foremost, "*That my heart has bled.*"
'Tis heav'n's last effort of good will to man;
When *pain* can't bless, heav'n quits us in despair.
Who fails to grieve, when just occasion calls,
Or grieves too much, deserves not to be blest;
Inhuman, or effeminate, his heart;
Reason absolves the grief, which *reason* ends.
May heav'n ne'er trust my friend with happiness,
Till it has taught him how to bear it well,
By previous pain; and made it *safe* to *smile!*
Such smiles are mine, and *such* may they remain;
Nor hazard their extinction, from excess.
My change of *heart* a change of *style* demands;
The CONSOLATION cancels the COMPLAINT,
And makes a convert of my guilty song.
As when o'er-labour'd, and inclin'd to breathe,
A panting traveller, some rising ground,
Some small ascent, has gain'd, he turns him round,

And measures with his eye the various vales,
The fields, woods, meads, and rivers, he has past;
And, satiate of his journey, thinks of home,
Endear'd by distance, nor affects more toil;
Thus I, though small, indeed, is that ascent
The muse has gain'd, review the paths she trod;
Various, extensive, beaten but by view;
And, conscious of her prudence in repose,
Pause; and with pleasure meditate an end,
Though still remote; so fruitful is my theme.
Through many a field of *moral* and *divine*,
The muse has stray'd; and much of *sorrow* seen
In human ways; and much of *false* and *vain*;
Which none, who travel this bare road, can miss.
O'er *friends deceas'd* full heartily she wept;
Of *love divine* the wonders she display'd;
Prov'd man *immortal!* shew'd the *source of joy*;
The *grand tribunal* rais'd; assign'd the bounds
Of *human grief:* In *few*, to close the whole,
The moral muse has shadow'd out a sketch,
Though not in form, nor with a RAPHAEL-stroke,
Of *most* our weakness needs *believe*, or *do*,
In this our land of travel, and of hope,
For peace on *earth*, or prospect of the *skies*.
What then remains? much! much! a mighty debt
To be discharg'd: These thoughts, O NIGHT! are thine;
From thee they came, like lovers' secret sighs,
While others slept. So, CYNTHIA (poets feign)
In shadows veil'd, soft-sliding from her sphere,
Her shepherd chear'd; of her enamour'd less,
Than I of thee.—And art thou still unsung,

Beneath whose brow, and by whose aid, I sing?
Immoral silence! where shall I begin?
Where end? or how steal music from the spheres,
To sooth their goddess?
O majestic NIGHT!
Nature's great ancestor! *day*'s elder-born!
And fated to survive the transient sun!
By mortals, and immortals, seen with awe!
A starry crown thy raven brow adorns,
An azure zone thy waist; clouds, in heav'n's loom
Wrought through varieties of shape and shade,
In ample folds of drapery divine,
Thy flowing mantle form; and, heaven throughout,
Voluminously pour thy pompous train.
Thy gloomy grandeurs (*nature*'s most august,
Inspiring aspect!) claim a grateful verse;
And, like a sable curtain starr'd with gold,
Drawn o'er my labours past, shall close the scene.
And what, O man! so *worthy* to be sung?
What more prepares us for the songs of heaven?
Creation, of archangels is the theme!
What, to be sung, so *needful?* What so well
Celestial joys prepare us to sustain?
The soul of man, HIS face design'd to see,
Who gave these wonders to be seen by man,
Has *here* a previous scene of objects *great*,
On which to dwell; to stretch to that expanse
Of thought, to rise to that exalted height
Of admiration, to contract that awe,
And give her whole capacities that strength,
Which best may qualify for *final* joy.

The more our spirits are inlarg'd on *earth*,
The deeper draught shall they receive of *heaven*.
Heav'n's KING! whose face unveil'd consummates bliss;
Redundant bliss! which fills that mighty void,
The whole creation leaves in human hearts!
THOU, who didst touch the lip of JESSE's son,
Rapt in sweet contemplation of these fires,
And set his harp in concert with the spheres;
While of thy works *material* the Supreme
I dare attempt, assist my daring song.
Loose me from *earth*'s inclosure, from the sun's
Contracted circle set my heart at large;
Eliminate my spirit, give it range
Through provinces of thought yet unexplor'd;
Teach me, by this stupendous scaffolding,
Creation's golden steps, to climb to THEE.
Teach me with *art* great *nature* to controul,
And spread a lustre o'er the shades of *night*.
Feel I thy kind assent? and shall the *sun*
Be seen at *midnight*, rising in my song?
LORENZO! come, and warm thee: thou, whose heart,
Whose *little* heart, is moor'd within a nook
Of this obscure terrestrial, anchor weigh.
Another ocean calls, a *nobler* port;
I am thy pilot, I thy prosp'rous gale.
Gainful thy voyage through yon azure main;
Main, without tempest, pirate, rock, or shore;
And whence thou may'st import *eternal* wealth;

And leave to *beggar'd* minds the *pearl* and *gold.*
Thy travels dost thou boast o'er foreign realms?
Thou *stranger* to the *world!* thy tour *begin*;
Thy tour through *nature*'s universal orb.
Nature delineates her whole chart at large;
On soaring souls, that sail among the spheres;
And man how purblind, if unknown the whole!
Who circles spacious *earth*, then travels *here*,
Shall own, he never was from *home* before!
Come, my * PROMETHEUS, from thy pointed rock
Of *false* ambition if unchain'd, we'll mount;
We'll *innocently*, steal celestial fire,
And kindle our devotion at the *stars*;
A theft, that shall not chain, but set thee free.
Above our atmosphere's intestine wars,
Rain's fountain-head, the magazine of hail;
Above the northern nests of feather'd snows,
The brew of thunders, and the flaming forge
That forms the crooked lightning; 'bove the caves
Where infant tempests wait their growing wings,
And tune their tender voices to that roar,
Which soon, perhaps shall shake a guilty world;
Above misconstru'd omens of the sky,
Far-travell'd comets' calculated blaze;
Elance thy thought, and think of *more* than *man.*
Thy soul, till now, contracted, wither'd, shrunk,
Blighted by blasts of *earth*'s unwholesome air,
Will blossom *here*; spread all her faculties
To these bright ardours; ev'ry pow'r unfold,

* Night the Eighth.

And rise into sublimities of thought.
Stars *teach*, as well as *shine*. At *nature*'s birth,
Thus their commission ran—"Be kind to *man*."
Where art thou, poor benighted traveller!
The *Stars* will light thee; though the moon should fail.
Where art thou, more benighted! more astray!
In ways immoral? The *Stars* call thee back;
And, if obey'd their counsel, set thee right.
This prospect vast, what is it?—Weigh'd aright,
'Tis nature's system of divinity,
And ev'ry student of the *Night* inspires.
'Tis *elder* Scripture, writ by GOD's own hand:
Scripture authentic! uncorrupt by man.
LORENZO! with my *Radius* (the rich gift
Of thought nocturnal!) I'll point out to thee
Its various lessons; some that may surprise
An un-adept in mysteries of NIGHT;
Little, perhaps, expected in *her* school,
Nor thought to grow on planet, or on star.
Bulls, lions, scorpions, monsters here we feign;
Ourselves more monstrous, not to see what here
Exists *indeed*;—a lecture to mankind.
What read we *here?*—Th' existence of a GOD?
Yes; and of other beings, man above;
Natives of *Æther!* Sons of higher climes!
And, what may move LORENZO's wonder more,
ETERNITY is written in the skies.
And whose eternity?—LORENZO! *Thine*;
Mankind's eternity. Nor FAITH alone,

VIRTUE grows here; *here* springs the sov'reign cure
Of almost ev'ry vice; but chiefly *Thine;*
Wrath, Pride, Ambition, and *impure Desire.*
LORENZO! Thou canst wake at midnight too,
Though not on *Morals* bent: *Ambition, Pleasure!*
Those tyrants I for Thee so * lately fought,
Afford their harrass'd slaves but slender rest.
Thou, to whom midnight is *immoral* noon,
And the sun's noon-tide blaze, prime dawn of day;
Not by thy climate, but capricious crime,
Commencing one of our *Antipodes!*
In thy nocturnal rove, one moment halt,
'Twixt stage and stage, of riot, and cabal;
And lift thine eye, (if bold an eye to lift,
If bold to meet the face of injur'd heav'n)
To yonder stars: For other ends they shine,
Than to light revellers from shame to shame,
And, thus, be made accomplices in guilt.
Why from yon arch, that infinite of space,
With infinite of lucid orbs replete,
Which set the living firmament on fire,
At the first glance, in such an overwhelm
Of wonderful, on man's astonish'd sight,
Rushes OMNIPOTENCE?—To curb our *Pride;*
Our *Reason* rouse, and lead it to that Power,
Whose love lets down these silver chains of light;
To draw up man's *Ambition* to *Himself,*
And bind our *chaste Affections* to His throne.

* Night the Eighth.

Thus the three virtues, least alive on earth,
And welcom'd on heav'n's coast with most applause,
An *Humble*, *Pure*, and *Heavenly-minded* heart,
Are *here* inspir'd:—And canst thou gaze too long?
Nor stands thy *Wrath* depriv'd of it's reproof,
Or un-upbraided by this radiant choir.
The planets of each system represent
Kind neighbours; mutual amity prevails;
Sweet interchange of rays, receiv'd, return'd;
Enlight'ning, and enlighten'd! All, at once,
Attracting, and attracted! Patriot like,
None sins against the welfare of the whole;
But their reciprocal, unselfish aid,
Affords an emblem of *Millenial* love.
Nothing in nature, much less *conscious* being,
Was e'er created solely for Itself:
Thus man his *sov'reign* duty learns in this
Material picture of benevolence.
And know, of all our supercilious race,
Thou most inflammable! Thou wasp of men!
Man's angry heart, *inspected*, would be found
As rightly set, as are the starry spheres;
'Tis *Nature*'s structure, broke by stubborn *Will*,
Breeds all that un-celestial discord *there*.
Wilt thou not feel the bias *Nature* gave?
Canst thou descend from converse with the skies,
And seize thy brother's throat?—For what—a *Clod*,
An inch of *Earth?* The *Planets* cry, "Forbear,"
They chase our double darkness; *Nature*'s gloom,
And (kinder still!) our *intellectual* night.

And see, *Day*'s amiable sister sends
Her invitation, in the softest rays
Of mitigated lustre; courts thy sight,
Which suffers from her tyrant-brother's blaze.
Night grants thee the full freedom of the skies,
Nor rudely reprimands thy lifted eye;
With *Gain*, and *Joy*, she bribes thee to be wise.
Night opes the noblest scenes, and sheds an awe,
Which gives those venerable scenes full weight,
And deep reception, in th' intender'd heart;
While light peeps through the darkness, like a spy;
And darkness shews its grandeur by the light.
Nor is the *Profit* greater than the *Joy*,
If human hearts at glorious objects glow,
And admiration can inspire delight.
What speak I more, than I, This moment, feel?
With pleasing stupor first the soul is struck
(Stupor ordain'd to make her truly wise!):
Then into transport starting from her trance,
With love, and admiration, how she glows!
This gorgeous apparatus! This display!
This ostentation of creative power!
This theatre!— what eye can take it in?
By what divine enchantment was it rais'd,
For minds of the first magnitude to launch
In endless speculation, and adore?
One sun by day, by night *Ten thousand* shine;
And light us deep into the DEITY;
How boundless in magnificence and might!
O what a confluence of ethereal fires,
Form urns un-number'd, down the steep of heav'n,

Streams to a point, and centres in my sight!
Nor tarries *there;* I feel it at my *Heart.*
My heart, at once, it humbles, and exalts;
Lays it in dust, and calls it to the skies.
Who sees it unexalted? or unaw'd?
Who sees it, and can stop at what is seen?
Material offspring of OMNIPOTENCE!
Inanimate, All-animating birth!
Work worthy *Him* who made it! Worthy praise!
All praise! praise *more* than human! nor deny'd
Thy praise *Divine!*—But tho' man, drown'd in sleep,
With-holds his homage, not *alone* I wake;
Bright legions swarm unseen, and sing, unheard
By mortal ear, the glorious Architect,
In This His universal temple hung
With lustres, with innumerable lights,
That shed religion on the soul; at once,
The *Temple,* and the *Preacher!* O how loud
It calls devotion! genuine growth of *Night!*
Devotion! daughter of astronomy!
An *undevout* astronomer is *mad.*
True; All things speak a GOD; but in the small,
Men trace out *Him;* in great, *He* seizes man;
Seizes, and elevates, and wraps, and fills
With new inquiries, 'mid associates new.
Tell me, ye stars! ye planets! tell me, all
Ye starr'd, and planeted, inhabitants! What is it?
What are these sons of wonder? Say, proud arch,
(Within those azure palaces they dwell)
Built with divine ambition! in disdain

Of limit built! built in the taste of heaven!
Vast concave! ample dome! wast thou design'd
A meet apartment for the DEITY?—
Not so; That thought alone thy state impairs,
Thy *Lofty* sinks, and shallows thy *Profound*,
And streightens thy *Diffusive*; dwarfs the whole,
And makes an universe an *Orrery*.
But when I drop mine eye, and look on man,
Thy right regain'd, thy grandeur is restor'd,
O *Nature!* wide flies off th' expanding round.
As when whole magazines, at once, are fir'd,
The smitten air is hollow'd by the blow;
The vast displosion dissipates the clouds;
Shock'd æther's billows dash the distant skies;
Thus (but far more) th' expanding round flies off,
And leaves a mighty void, a spacious womb,
Might teem with new creation; re-inflam'd
Thy luminaries triumph, and assume
Divinity themselves. Nor was it strange,
Matter high-wrought to such surprising pomp,
Such godlike glory, stole the style of gods,
From ages dark, obtuse, and steep'd in *Sense*;
For, sure, to *Sense*, they truly are divine,
And half-absolv'd idolatry from guilt;
Nay, turn'd it into virtue. Such it *was*
In those, who put forth all they had of *Man*.
Unlost, to lift their thought, nor mounted higher;
But, weak of wing, on planets perch'd; and thought
What was their highest, must be their ador'd.
But They how *weak*, who could no higher mount?

And are there, then, LORENZO! Those, to whom
Unseen, and unexistent, are the Same?
And if Incomprehensible is join'd,
Who dare pronounce it madness, to *believe?*
Why has the mighty BUILDER thrown aside
All measure in His work; stretch'd out His line
So far, and spread amazement o'er the whole?
Then (as he took delight in wide extremes),
Deep in the bosom of His universe,
Dropt down that *reas'ning* mite, that insect, *Man*,
To crawl, and gaze, and wonder at the scene?——
That man might ne'er presume to plead amazement
For disbelief of wonders in *Himself*.
Shall GOD be less miraculous, than what
His hand has form'd? Shall *Mysteries* descend
From *Un-mysterious?* Things more Elevate,
Be more familiar? Uncreated lie
More obvious than Created, to the grasp
Of human thought? The *more* of Wonderful
Is heard in *Him*, the *more* we should assent.
Could we conceive *Him*, GOD He could not be;
Or *He* not GOD, or *we* could not be *Men*.
A GOD alone can comprehend a GOD;
Man's distance how immense! On *such* a theme,
Know This, LORENZO! (seem it ne'er so strange)
Nothing can *satisfy*, but what *confounds*;
Nothing, but what *astonishes*, is *true*.
The scene thou seest, attests the truth I sing,
And ev'ry star sheds light upon thy creed.
These stars, this furniture, this cost of heaven,

If but *reported*, thou hadst ne'er believ'd;
But thine *Eye* tells thee, the *Romance* is true.
The grand of nature is th' Almighty's oath,
In *Reason*'s court, to silence *Unbelief*.
How my mind, op'ning at this scene, imbibes
The moral emanations of the skies,
While nought, perhaps, LORENZO less admires!
Has the Great Sov'reign sent ten thousand worlds
To tell us, *He* resides above them All,
In glory's unapproachable recess?
And dare *Earth*'s bold inhabitants deny
The sumptuous, the magnific embassy
A moment's audience? Turn we, nor will hear
From whom they come, or what they would impart
For man's emolument; sole cause that stoops
Their grandeur to man's eye? LORENZO! rouse;
Let thought, awaken'd, take the lightning's wing,
And glance from east to west, from pole to pole.
Who sees, but is confounded, or convinc'd?
Renounces *Reason*, or a GOD adores?
Mankind was sent into the world to *see*:
Sight gives the science needful to their peace;
That obvious science asks *small* learning's aid.
Wouldst thou on metaphysic pinions soar?
Or wound thy patience amid logic thorns?
Or travel history's enormous round?
Nature no such hard task injoins: She gave
A make to man directive of his thought;
A make set upright, pointing to the stars,
As who shall say, "Read thy chief lesson there."

Too late to read this manuscript of heaven,
When, like a parchment-scroll, shrunk up by flames,
It folds LORENZO's lesson from his sight.
Lesson how various! Not the GOD alone,
I see His *Ministers*; I see, diffus'd
In radiant orders, essences sublime,
Of various offices, of various plume,
In heav'nly liveries, distinctly clad,
Azure, green, purple, pearl, or downy gold,
Or all commix'd; they stand, with wings outspread,
List'ning to catch the Master's least command,
And fly through *Nature*, ere the moment ends;
Numbers innumerable!—Well conceiv'd
By *Pagan*, and by *Christian!* O'er each sphere
Presides an angel, to direct its course,
And feed, or fan, its flames; or to discharge
Other high trusts unknown. For who can see
Such pomp of matter, and imagine, *Mind*,
For which *alone* Inanimate was made,
More sparingly dispens'd? That nobler son,
Far liker the great SIRE!—'Tis thus the skies
Inform us of superiors numberless,
As much, in *Excellence*, above mankind,
As above *Earth*, in *Magnitude*, the *Spheres*.
These, as a cloud of witnesses, hang o'er us;
In a throng'd theatre are all our deeds;
Perhaps, a thousand demigods descend
On ev'ry beam we see, to walk with men.
Aweful reflection! Strong restraint from ill!

Yet, *here*, our virtue finds still stronger aid
From these ethereal glories *Sense* surveys.
Something, like magic, strikes from this blue vault;
With just attention is it view'd? We feel
A sudden succour, unimplor'd, unthought;
Nature herself does half the work of *Man*.
Seas, rivers, mountains, forests, desarts, rocks,
The promontory's height, the depth profound
Of subterranean, excavated grots,
Black brow'd, and vaulted high, and yawning wide
From *Nature*'s structure, or the scoop of *Time*;
If ample of dimension, vast of size,
Ev'n *These* an aggrandizing impulse give;
Of solemn thought enthusiastic heights
Ev'n *These* infuse.—But what of vast in *These?*
Nothing;—or we must own the skies forgot.
Much less in *Art*.—Vain *Art!* Thou pigmy power!
How dost thou swell and strut, with human pride,
To shew thy littleness! What childish toys,
Thy watry columns squirted to the clouds!
Thy bason'd rivers, and imprison'd seas!
Thy mountains moulded into forms of men!
Thy hundred-gated *Capitals!* or Those
Where three days travel left us much to ride;
Gazing on miracles by mortals wrought,
Arches triumphal, theatres immense,
Or nodding *Gardens* pendent in mid-air!
Or *Temples* proud to meet their Gods half-way!
Yet *These* affect us in no common kind.
What then the force of such superior scenes?

Enter a temple, it will strike an awe:
What awe from This the DEITY has built?
A *Good Man* seen, though silent, counsel gives:
The touch'd spectator wishes to be wise:
In a bright mirror His own hands have made,
Here we see something like the face of GOD.
Seems it not then enough, to say, LORENZO!
To man abandon'd, "*Hast thou seen the skies?*"
And yet, so thwarted nature's kind design
By daring man, he makes her sacred awe
(That guard from ill) his shelter, his temptation
To more than common guilt, and quite inverts
Celestial art's intent. The trembling stars
See crimes gigantic, stalking through the gloom
With front erect, that hide their head by day,
And making night still *darker* by their deeds.
Slumb'ring in covert, till the shades descend,
Rapine and *Murder*, link'd, now prowl for prey.
The miser earths his treasure; and the thief,
Watching the mole, half-beggars him ere morn.
Now *Plots*, and foul *Conspiracies*, awake;
And, muffling up their horrors from the moon,
Havock and devastation they prepare,
And kindoms tott'ring in the field of blood.
Now sons of riot in mid-revel rage.
What shall I do?—Suppress it? or proclaim?—
Why *sleeps* the thunder? Now, LORENZO! now,
His best friend's couch the rank adulterer
Ascends secure; and laughs at gods and men.
Prepost'rous madmen, void of fear or shame,

Lay their crimes bare to these chaste eyes of heaven;
Yet shrink, and shudder, at a mortal's sight.
Were moon, and stars, for villains *only* made?
To *guide*, yet *screen* them with tenebrious light?
No; they were made to fashion the sublime
Of human hearts, and *wiser* make the *Wise*.
Those ends were answer'd once; when mortals liv'd
Of stronger wing, of aquiline accent
In theory sublime. O how unlike
Those vermine of the night, this moment sung,
Who crawl on *Earth*, and on her venom feed!
Those antient sages, *Human* stars! They met
Their brothers of the *Skies*, at midnight hour;
Their counsel ask'd; and, what they ask'd, *obey'd*.
The *Stagirite*, and PLATO, He who drank
The poison'd bowl, and He of *Tusculum*,
With him of *Corduba* (immortal names!)
In these unbounded, and *Elysian*, walks,
An area fit for GODS, and Godlike men,
They took their nightly round, through radiant paths
By *Seraphs* trod; instructed, chiefly, thus,
To tread in Their bright footsteps here below;
To walk in worth still brighter than the skies.
There they contracted their contempt of *Earth*;
Of hopes eternal kindled, *There*, the fire;
There, as in near approach, they glow'd, and grew
(Great visitants!) more intimate with GOD,
More worth to *Men*, more joyous to *Themselves*.
Through *various Virtues*, they, with ardor, ran
The *Zodiac* of their learn'd, illustrious lives.

In *Christian* hearts, O for a *Pagan* zeal!
A *needful*, but *opprobrious* pray'r! As much
Our *Ardor* Less, as Greater is our *Light*.
How monst'rous This in *Morals!* Scarce more strange
Would this *Phænomenon* in nature strike,
A *Sun*, that froze her, or a *Star*, that warm'd.
What taught these heroes of the moral world?
To these thou giv'st thy *Praise*, give *Credit* too.
These doctors ne'er were pension'd to deceive thee;
And *Pagan* tutors are thy taste.—They taught,
That, that narrow views betray to misery:
That, wise it is to comprehend the whole:
That, *Virtue*, rose from *Nature*, ponder'd well,
The single base of *Virtue* built to heaven:
That GOD, and *Nature*, our attention claim:
That, *Nature* is the glass reflecting GOD,
As, by the *Sea*, reflected is the *Sun*,
Too glorious to be gaz'd on in his sphere:
That, *Mind immortal* loves *immortal* aims.
That, *boundless Mind* affects a *boundless Space*:
That vast surveys, and the sublime of things,
The soul assimilate, and make her great:
That, therefore, heav'n her glories, as a fund
Of inspiration, thus spreads out to man.
Such are their doctrines; *such* the *Light* inspir'd.
And what more true? What truth of greater weight?
The soul of man was made to walk the skies;
Delightful outlet of her prison *Here!*
There, disincumber'd from her chains, the ties
Of toys terrestrial, she can rove at large,

There, freely can respire, dilate, extend,
In full proportion let loose all her powers;
And, *undeluded*, grasp at something great.
Nor, as a stranger, does she wander there;
But, wonderful herself, through wonder strays;
Contemplating *their* grandeur, finds *her own*;
Dives deep in their œconomy divine,
Sits high in Judgment on their various laws,
And, like a master, judges not amiss.
Hence greatly pleas'd, and justly proud, the soul
Grows conscious of her birth celestial; breathes
More life, more vigour, in her native air;
And feels herself *at home* amongst the stars;
And, feeling, emulates her country's praise.

What call we, then, the firmament, LORENZO!—
As *Earth* the body, since, the *Skies* sustain
The soul with food, that gives immortal life,
Call it, The noble pasture of the *Mind*,
Which there expatiates, strengthens, and exults,
And riots through the luxuries of thought.
Call it, The Garden of the DEITY,
Blossom'd with stars, redundant in the growth
Of fruit ambrosial; *moral* fruit to man.
Call it, The breast-plate of the true High-priest,
Ardent with gems oracular, that give,
In points of highest moment, right response;
And ill neglected, if we prize our peace.

Thus, have we found a *true* astrology;
Thus, have we found a new, and noble sense,
In which *alone* stars govern human fates.

O that the *Stars* (as some have feign'd) let fall
Bloodshed, and havock, on embattl'd realms,
And rescu'd *Monarchs* from so black a guilt!
BOURBON! this wish how gen'rous in a foe!
Wouldst thou be great, wouldst thou become a God,
And stick thy deathless name among the stars,
For mighty conquests on a needle's point?
Instead of forging chains for *foreigners*,
Bastile thy *Tutor*: Grandeur all thy aim?
As yet thou know'st not what it is: How great,
How glorious, *then*, appears the *Mind* of man,
When in it all the stars, and planets, roll!
And what it *seems*, it *is*: *Great* objects make
Great minds, enlarging as their views enlarge;
Those still more Godlike, as *These* more divine.
And *more* divine than *These*, thou canst not see.
Dazzled, o'erpower'd, with the delicious draught
Of miscellaneous splendors, how I reel
From thought to thought, inebriate, without end!
An *Eden*, this! a PARADISE *unlost!*
I meet the DEITY in ev'ry view,
And tremble at my nakedness before him!
O that I could but reach the *Tree of Life!*
For *Here* it grows, unguarded from our taste;
No *Flaming Sword* denies our entrance *Here*;
Would man but gather, he might *live for ever*.
LORENZO! much of *Moral* hast thou seen.
Of curious arts art thou more fond? Then mark
The *Mathematic* glories of the skies,
In number, weight, and measure, all ordain'd.

Lorenzo's boasted builders, *Chance*, and *Fate*,
Are left to finish his aërial towers;
Wisdom and *Choice*, their well-known characters
Here deep impress; and claim it for their own.
Though splendid all, no splendor void of use;
Use rivals *Beauty*; *Art* contends with *Power*;
No wanton waste, amid effuse expence;
The great Oeconomist adjusting all
To prudent pomp, magnificently wise.
How rich the prospect! and for ever new!
And *newest* to the man that views it *most*;
For newer still in infinite succeeds.
Then, these aërial racers, O how swift!
How the shaft loiters from the strongest string!
Spirit alone can distance the career.
Orb above orb ascending without end!
Circle in circle, without end, inclos'd!
Wheel, within wheel; Ezekiel! like to thine!
Like thine, it seems a vision or a dream;
Though *seen*, we labour to believe it *true!*
What involution! what extent! what swarms
Of worlds, that laugh at *Earth!* immensely great!
Immensely distant from each other's spheres!
What, then, the wond'rous *Space* thro' which they roll?
At once it quite ingulphs all human thought;
'Tis comprehension's absolute defeat.
Nor think thou seest a wild disorder here;
Through this illustrious chaos to the sight,
Arrangement neat, and chastest order, reign.

The path prescrib'd, inviolably kept,
Upbraids the lawless sallies of mankind.
Worlds, ever thwarting, never interfere;
What knots are ty'd! how soon are they dissolv'd,
And set the seeming marry'd planets free!
They rove for ever, without error rove;
Confusion unconfus'd! nor less admire
This tumult untumultuous; all on wing!
In motion, all! yet what profound repose!
What fervid action, yet no noise! as aw'd
To silence, by the presence of their LORD;
Or hush'd by *His* command, in love to man,
And bid let fall soft beams on human rest,
Restless themselves. On yon cærulean plain,
In exultation to *Their* GOD, and *Thine*,
They dance, they sing eternal jubilee,
Eternal celebration of *His* praise.
But, since their *Song* arrives not at our ear,
Their *Dance* perplex'd exhibits to the sight
Fair *Hieroglyphic* of *His* peerless power.
Mark, how the *Labyrinthian* turns they take,
The circles intricate, and mystic maze,
Weave the grand cypher of *Omnipotence*;
To *Gods*, how great! how legible to *Man!*
Leaves so much wonder greater wonder still?
Where are the pillars that support the skies?
What more than *Atlantean* shoulder props
Th' incumbent load? What magic, what strange art,
In fluid air these pond'rous orbs sustains?
Who would not think them hung in golden chains?—

And so they are; in the high will of heaven,
Which fixes all; makes adamant of air,
Or air of adamant; makes all of nought,
Or nought of all; if *such* the dread decree.
Imagine from their deep foundations torn
The most gigantic sons of earth, the broad
And tow'ring *Alps*, all tost into the sea;
And, light as down, or volatile as air,
Their bulks enormous, dancing on the waves,
In time, and measure, exquisite; while all
The winds, in emulation of the spheres,
Tune their sonorous instruments aloft;
The concert swell, and animate the ball.
Would this appear amazing? What, then, worlds,
In a far thinner element sustain'd,
And acting the same part, with greater skill,
More rapid movement, and for noblest *Ends*?
More *obvious* ends to pass, are not these stars
The seats majestic, proud imperial thrones,
On which angelic delegates of heaven,
At certain periods, as the Sov'REIGN nods,
Discharge high trusts of *Vengeance*, or of *Love*;
To clothe, in outward grandeur, grand design,
And acts most solemn still more solemnize?
Ye CITIZENS of air! what ardent thanks,
What full effusion of the grateful heart,
Is due from man indulg'd in such a sight!
A sight so noble! and a sight so kind!
It drops *new* truths at ev'ry *new* survey!
Feels not LORENZO something stir within,

That sweeps away all period? As these spheres
Measure duration, they no less inspire
The Godlike hope of ages without end.
The boundless *Space*, through which these rovers take
Their restless roam, suggests the sister thought
Of boundless *Time*. Thus, by kind *Nature*'s skill,
To man un-labour'd, that important guest,
ETERNITY, finds entrance at the *Sight:*
And an *Eternity*, for man ordain'd,
Or these his destin'd midnight counsellors,
The *Stars*, had never whisper'd it to man.
NATURE *informs*, but ne'er *insults*, her sons,
Could she then kindle the most ardent wish
To *disappoint* it?—That is blasphemy.
Thus, of thy creed a second article,
Momentous, as th' existence of a GOD,
Is found (as I conceive) where rarely sought;
And thou may'st read thy *Soul immortal*, Here.
Here, then, LORENZO! on these glories dwell;
Nor want the gilt, illuminated, roof,
That calls the wretched *Gay* to dark delights.
Assemblies?—This is one divinely bright;
Here, un-endanger'd in health, wealth, or fame,
Range through the fairest, and the SULTAN scorn,
He, wise as *Thou*, no *Crescent* holds so fair,
As that, which on his turban awes a world;
And thinks the *Moon* is proud to copy him.
Look on her, and gain more than worlds can give,
A mind superior to the charms of *Power*.
Thou muffled in delusions of this life!

Can yonder *Moon* turn ocean in his bed,
From side to side, in constant ebb, and flow,
And purify from stench his watry realms?
And fails her *moral* influence? wants she power
To turn LORENZO's stubborn tide of thought
From stagnating on *Earth*'s infected shore,
And purge from nuisance his corrupted heart?
Fails her attraction when it draws to heaven?
Nay, and to what thou valu'st more, *Earth*'s joy?
Minds elevate, and panting for *Unseen*,
And defecate from *Sense*, alone obtain
Full relish of existence un-deflowr'd,
The *Life* of life, the *Zest* of worldly bliss:
All else on earth amounts— to what? To *This*:
" BAD to be *Suffer'd*; BLESSINGS to be *Left*:"
Earth's richest inventory boasts no more.
Of higher scenes be, then, the call obey'd.
O let me gaze!—Of gazing there's no end.
O let me think!—Thought too is wilder'd *here*;
In mid-way flight imagination tires;
Yet soon re-prunes her wing to soar anew,
Her point unable to forbear, or gain;
So *great* the pleasure, so *profound* the plan!
A banquet, this, where men, and angels, meet,
Eat the same *Manna*, mingle earth, and heaven.
How distant some of these nocturnal suns!
So distant (says the sage) 'twere not absurd
To doubt, if beams, set out at *Nature*'s birth,
Are yet arriv'd at this so foreign world;
Though nothing half so rapid as their flight.

An eye of awe and wonder let me roll,
And roll *for ever:* Who can satiate sight
In *such* a scene? in such an ocean wide
Of deep astonishment? where depth, height, breadth,
Are lost in their extremes; and where to count
The thick-sown glories in this field of fire,
Perhaps a *Seraph*'s computation fails.
Now, go, *Ambition!* boast thy boundless might
In conquest, o'er the tenth part of a grain.
  And yet LORENZO calls for miracles,
To give his tott'ring faith a solid base.
Why call for less than is *already* thine?
Thou art no novice in theology;
What is a *Miracle?*—'Tis a reproach,
'Tis an implicit satire, on mankind;
And while it *satisfies*, it *censures* too.
To common sense, great *Nature*'s course proclaims
A DEITY: When mankind falls asleep,
A *Miracle* is sent, as an alarm;
To wake the world, and prove *Him* o'er again,
By *recent* argument, but not more *strong.*
Say, which imports more plenitude of power,
Or nature's laws to *fix*, or to *repeal?*
To *make* a sun, or *stop* his mid career?
To countermand his orders, and send back
The flaming courier to the frighted *East,*
Warm'd, and astonish'd, at his ev'ning ray?
Or bid the *Moon*, as with her journey tir'd,
In *Ajalon*'s soft, flow'ry vale repose?
Great things are these; still greater, to *create,*

From ADAM's bow'r look down thro' the whole train
Of miracles;—resistless is their pow'r?
They do not, *can* not, more amaze the mind,
Than this, *call'd* un-miraculous survey,
If *duly* weigh'd, if *rationally* seen,
If seen with *human* eyes. The *Brute*, indeed,
Sees nought but *Spangles* here; the *Fool*, no more.
Say'st thou, "The course of *Nature* governs all?"
The *Course* of *Nature* is the *Art* of GOD.
The miracles thou call'st for, *This* attest;
For say, could *Nature Nature*'s course controul?
But, miracles apart, who sees HIM not,
Nature's CONTROULER, AUTHOR, GUIDE, and END?
Who turns his eye on *Nature*'s midnight face,
But must enquire—"What hand behind the scene,
"What arm Almighty, put these wheeling globes
"In motion, and wound up the vast machine?
"Who rounded in his palm these spacious orbs?
"Who bowl'd them flaming thro' the dark profound,
"Num'rous as glitt'ring gems of morning dew,
"Or sparks from populous cities in a blaze,
"And set the bosom of *Old Night* on fire?
"Peopled her desart, and made horror smile?"
Or, if the military style delights thee,
(For stars have fought their battles, leagu'd with man)
"Who marshals this bright host? Enrolls their names?
"Appoints their posts, their marches, and returns,
"Punctual, at stated periods? who disbands
"These vet'ran troops, their final duty done,
"If e'er disbanded?"—HE, whose potent word,

Like the loud trumpet, levy'd first their powers
In *Night*'s inglorious empire, where they slept
In beds of darkness: arm'd them with fierce flames,
Arrang'd, and disciplin'd, and cloath'd in gold;
And call'd them out of *Chaos* to the field,
Where now they war *Vice* and *Unbelief.*
O let us join this army! joining these,
Will give us hearts intrepid, at that hour,
When *brighter* flames shall cut a *darker* night;
When these strong demonstrations of a GOD
Shall hide their heads, or tumble from their spheres,
And one *eternal* curtain cover all!
Struck at *that* thought, as new awak'd, I lift
A more enlighten'd eye, and read the stars
To man still more propitious; and their aid
(Though guiltless of idolatry) implore,
Nor longer rob them of their noblest name.
O ye *Dividers of my Time!* Ye bright
Accomptants of my days, and months, and years,
In your fair Kalendar, distinctly mark'd!
Since that authentic, radiant register,
Though man inspects it not, stands good against him?
Since *You*, and years, roll on, tho' man stands still;
Teach me my days to number, and apply
My trembling heart to *Wisdom;* now beyond
All shadow of excuse for fooling on.
Age smooths our path to prudence; sweeps aside
The snares keen *Appetite*, and passion, spread
To catch stray souls; and woe to that grey head,
Whose folly would undo, what *Age* has done!

Aid then, aid, all ye stars!—Much rather, THOU,
Great ARTIST! THOU, whose finger set aright
This exquisite *Machine*, with all its *Wheels*,
Though intervolv'd, exact; and pointing out
Life's rapid, and irrevocable flight,
With such an *Index* fair, as none can miss,
Who lifts an eye, nor sleeps till it is clos'd.
Open *mine* eye, dread DEITY! to read
The tacit doctrine of thy works; to see
Things as they *are*, un-alter'd through the glass
Of worldly wishes. *Time! Eternity!*
('Tis these, mis-measur'd, ruin all mankind)
Set them before me; let me lay them both
In equal scale, and learn their various weight.
Let *Time* appear a *Moment*, as it *is*;
And let *Eternity*'s full orb, at once,
Turn on my soul, and strike it into heaven.
When shall I see far more than charms me now?
Gaze on creation's model in *Thy* breast
Unveil'd, nor wonder at the transcript more?
When this vile, foreign dust, which smothers all
That travel *Earth*'s deep vale, shall I shake off?
When shall my soul her incarnation quit,
And, re-adopted to thy blest embrace,
Obtain her *Apotheosis* in THEE?
Dost think, LORENZO, this is wand'ring wide?
No, 'tis directly striking at the mark;
To wake thy *dead Devotion* * was my point;

* Page 135.

And how I bless *Night*'s consecrating shades,
Which to a *Temple* turns an *Universe*;
Fill us with great ideas, full of heaven,
And antidote the pestilential earth!
In ev'ry storm, that either frowns, or falls,
What an asylum has the soul in pray'r!
And what a Fane is *This*, in which to pray!
And what a GOD must dwell in such a Fane!
O what a genius must inform the skies!
And is LORENZO's salamander-heart
Cold, and untouch'd, amid these sacred fires?
O ye nocturnal sparks! Ye glowing embers.
On heav'n's broad hearth! who burn, or burn no more,
Who blaze, or die, as Great JEHOVAH's breath
Or blows you, or forbears; assist my song;
Pour your whole influence; exorcise his heart,
So long possest; and bring him back to *Man.*
And is LORENZO a demurrer *still*?
Pride in thy parts provokes thee to contest
Truths, which, contested, put thy *Parts* to shame.
Nor shame they more LORENZO's *Head* than *Heart*,
A *faithless* heart, how despicably small!
Too streight, aught great, or gen'rous, to receive!
Fill'd with an atom! fill'd, and foul'd, with *Self!*
And Self mistaken! Self, that lasts an hour!
Instincts and *Passions*, of the nobler kind,
Lie suffocated there; or *They* alone,
Reason apart, would wake high hope; and open,
To ravish'd thought, that *Intellectual* sphere,
Where, *Order*, *Wisdom*, *Goodness*, *Providence*,

Their endless miracles of love display,
And promise all the truly great desire.
The mind that would be *happy*, must be *great*;
Great, in its *wishes*; great, in its *surveys*.
Extended views a narrow mind extend;
Push out its corrugate, expansive make,
Which, ere long, *more* than planets shall embrace.
A man of *Compass* makes a man of *Worth*;
Divine contemplate, and become *Divine*.
As man was made for glory, and for bliss,
All littleness is in approach to woe;
Open thy bosqm, set thy wishes wide,
And let in *Manhood*; let in *Happiness*;
Admit the boundless theatre of thought
From nothing, up to GOD; which makes a *Man*.
Take GOD from *Nature*, nothing great is left;
Man's mind is in a pit, and nothing sees;
Man's heart is in a jakes, and loves the mire.
Emerge from thy profound; erect thine eye;
See thy distress! how close art thou besieg'd!
Besieg'd by *Nature*, the proud sceptic's foe!
Inclos'd by these innumerable worlds,
Sparkling conviction on the darkest mind,
As in a golden net of PROVIDENCE.
How art thou caught, sure captive of belief!
From this thy blest captivity, what art,
What blasphemy to reason, sets thee free!
This scene is heav'n's indulgent violence:
Canst thou bear up against this tide of glory?
What is earth bosom'd in these ambient orbs,

But, faith in GOD impos'd, and press'd on man?
Dar'st thou still litigate thy desp'rate *cause*,
Spite of these num'rous, aweful, *witnesses*,
And doubt the *deposition* of the skies?
O how laborious is thy way to ruin!
Laborious! 'tis *impracticable* quite;
To sink beyond a *doubt*, in this debate,
With all his weight of wisdom and of will,
And crime flagitious, I defy a fool.
Some wish they *did*; but *no* man *disbelieves*.
GOD is a *Spirit*; *Spirit* cannot strike
These gross, material organs; GOD by man
As much is seen, as *Man* a GOD can see,
In these astonishing exploits of power,
What order, beauty, motion, distance, size!
Concertion of design, how exquisite!
How complicate, in their divine police!
Apt means! great ends! consent to gen'ral good!—
Each attribute of these *material* gods,
So long (and that with specious pleas) ador'd,
A sep'rate conquest gains o'er rebel thought;
And leads in triumph the whole mind of man.
LORENZO! this may seem *harangue* to thee;
Such all is apt to seem, that thwarts our will.
And dost thou, then, demand a *simple* proof
Of this great master moral of the skies,
Unskill'd, or dis-inclin'd, to read it *there*?
Since 'tis the basis, and all drops without it,
Take it, in one compact, unbroken chain.
Such proof insists on an attentive ear;

'Twill not make one amid a mob of thoughts,
And, for thy notice, struggle with the world.
Retire;—the *world* shut out;—thy thoughts call home;—
Imagination's airy wing repress;——
Lock up thy *Senses*;—let no *Passion* stir;—
Wake all to *Reason*;—let *her* reign alone;
Then, in thy *Soul*'s deep silence, and the depth
Of *Nature*'s silence, midnight, thus inquire.
As *I* have done; and shall inquire no more.
In nature's channel, thus the questions run.
" What am I? and from *Whence*?—I nothing " know,
" But that I *am*; and, since I *am*, conclude
" Something *Eternal*: Had there e'er been *Nought*,
" *Nought* still had been: *Eternal* there *must* be.—
" But *what* eternal?—Why not *Human Race*?
" And ADAM's ancestors without an end?—
" That's hard to be conceiv'd; since ev'ry link
" Of that long chain'd succession is so frail;
" Can ev'ry *Part depend*, and not the *Whole*?
" Yet grant it true; *new* difficulties rise;
" I'm still quite out at sea; nor see the shore.
" Whence *Earth*, and these bright *Orbs*?—*Eternal* " too?
" Grant *Matter* was eternal; still these *Orbs*
" Would want some other father;—much design
" Is seen in all their *Motions*, all their *Makes*;
" *Design* implies *Intelligence*, and *Art*;
" *That* can't be from *Themselves*—or *Man*; *That* art

" Man scarce can comprehend, could man bestow?
" And nothing greater yet allow'd than *Man.*—
" Who, *Motion*, foreign to the smallest grain,
" Shot through vast masses of enormous weight?
" Who bid brute *Matter*'s restive lump assume
" Such various forms, and gave it wings to fly?
" Has matter *innate* motion? then each atom,
" Asserting its indisputable right
" To dance, would form an universe of dust:
" Has matter *none?* Then whence these glorious forms
" And boundless flights, from *Shapeless*, and *Repos'd?*
" Has matter *more* than motion? Has it thought,
" Judgment, and genius? Is it deeply learn'd
" In *Mathematics?* Has it fram'd *such* laws,
" Which but to guess, a NEWTON made immortal?—
" If so, how each *sage* atom laughs at me,
" Who think a *Clod* inferior to a *Man!*
" If art, to form; and counsel, to conduct;
" And that with greater far, than human skill;
" Resides not in each block;—a GODHEAD reigns.—
" Grant, then, invisible, eternal, MIND;
" *That* granted, all is solv'd.—But, granting that,
" Draw I not o'er me a still darker cloud?
" Grant I not that which I can ne'er conceive?
" A being without origin, or end!—
" Hail, human liberty! There is no GOD—
" Yet, Why? on either scheme that knot subsists;
" Subsist it *must*, in GOD, or *Human Race;*
" If in the last, how many knots beside,

" Indissoluble all?—Why chuse it *There*,
" Where, chosen, still subsist ten thousand more?
" Reject it, where, *That* chosen, all the rest
" Dispers'd, leave *Reason*'s whole horizon clear?
" This is not reason's dictate; *Reason* says,
" Close with the side where *One* grain turns the scale;
" What vast preponderance is here! can reason
" With louder voice exclaim—*Believe a* GOD?
" And *Reason* heard, is the sole mark of man.
" What things impossible must man think true,
" On any other system! and how strange
" To *disbelieve*, through mere credulity!"
If, in this chain, LORENZO finds no flaw,
Let it for ever bind him to *Belief*.
And where the link, in which a flaw he finds?
And, if a GOD there is, that GOD how great!
How great that POW'R, whose providential care
Thro' these bright orbs' dark centres darts a ray!
Of *Nature* universal threads the whole!
And hangs *Creation*, like a precious gem,
Though little, on a footstool of his throne!
That little gem, how large! A weight let fall
From a fixt star, in ages can it reach
This distant *Earth!* Say, then, LORENZO! where,
Where, ends this mighty building? Where, begin
The suburbs of Creation? Where, the wall
Whose battlements look o'er into the vale
Of non-existence! NOTHING's strange abode!
Say, at what point of space JEHOVAH dropp'd
His slacken'd *Line*, and laid his *Balance* by;

Weigh'd *Worlds*, and measur'd *Infinite*, no more?
Where, rears His *terminating Pillar* high
Its extra-mundane head? and says, to gods,
In characters illustrious as the *sun*,
I stand, the plan's proud period; I pronounce
The work accomplish'd; the Creation clos'd:
Shout, all ye gods! nor shout ye gods alone;
Of all that lives, or, if devoid of life,
That rests, or rolls, ye heights, and depths resound!
Resound! resound! ye depths, and heights, resound!
Hard are those questions!—Answer *harder* still.
Is *This* the sole exploit, the single birth,
The solitary son of *Pow'r Divine?*
Or has th' Almighty FATHER, with a breath,
Impregnated the womb of distant *Space?*
Has *He* not bid, in various provinces,
Brother-Creations the dark bowels burst
Of *Light* primæval; barren, now, no more?
And *He* the central sun, transpiercing all
Those *Giant-Generations*, which disport
And dance, as *Motes*, in his meridian ray;
That ray withdrawn, benighted, or absorb'd,
In that *Abyss of Horror*, whence they sprung;
While *Chaos* triumphs, repossest of all
Rival *Creation* ravish'd from his throne?
CHAOS! of *Nature* both the womb, and gr
Think'st thou my scheme, LORENZO, spreads too wide?
Is this *extravagant?*—No; this is *just*;
Just, in *conjecture*, though 'twere false in *fact*.

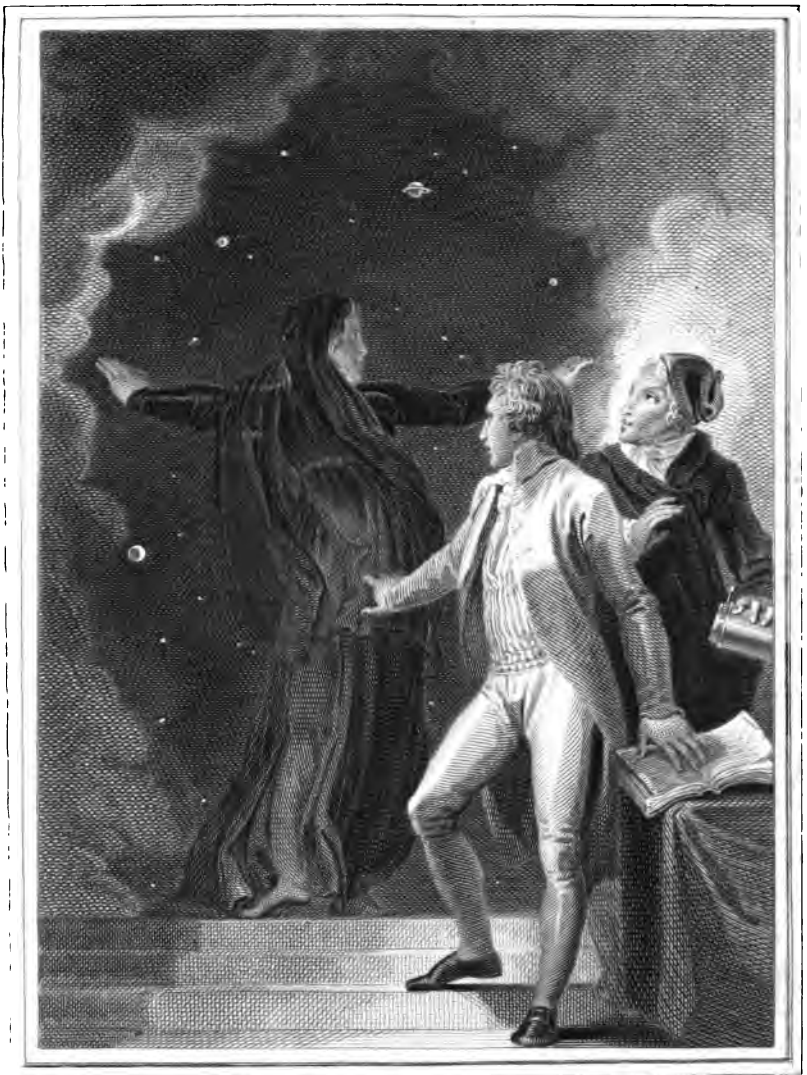
If 'tis an error, 'tis an error sprung
From noble root, high thought of the MOST-HIGH.
But wherefore error? Who can prove it such?—
He that can set OMNIPOTENCE a bound.
Can man *conceive* beyond what GOD can *do*?
Nothing, but *quite Impossible* is *hard.*
He summons into being, with like ease,
A whole *Creation*, and a single *Grain.*
Speaks he the word? a thousand worlds are born!
A Thousand worlds? there's space for Millions more;
And in what space can his great *Fiat* fail?
Condemn me not, cold critic! but indulge
The warm *Imagination:* Why condemn?
Why not indulge such thoughts, as swell our hearts
With fuller admiration of *That Power*,
Who gives our hearts with such high thoughts to swell?
Why not indulge in *His* augmented praise?
Darts not *His* glory a still brighter ray,
The less is left to *Chaos*, and the realms
Of hideous *Night*, where *Fancy* strays aghast;
And, though most *talkative*, makes no *report?*
Still seems my thought enormous? Think again;—
Experience 'self shall aid thy lame belief.
Glasses (that revelation to the sight!)
Have they not led us in the deep disclose
Of fine-spun *Nature*, exquisitely *small*,
And, though *demonstrated*, still *ill-conceived?*
If, then, on the reverse, the mind would mount
In *Magnitude*, what mind can mount too far,
To keep the balance, and creation *poise?*

Defect alone can err on such a theme;
What is too great, if we the *Cause* survey?
Stupendous ARCHITECT! THOU, THOU art all!
My soul flies up and down in thoughts of THEE,
And finds herself but at the centre still!
I AM, thy name! *Existence*, all *Thine own!*
Creation's nothing; flatter'd much, if styl'd
" *The thin, the fleeting Atmosphere of GOD.*"
O for the voice—of what? of whom?—What voice
Can answer to my wants, in *such* ascent,
As dares to deem one universe too small?
Tell me, LORENZO! (for now *Fancy* glows,
Fir'd in the vortex of Almighty power)
Is not this home creation, in the map
Of universal *Nature*, as a speck,
Like fair BRITANNIA in our little ball;
Exceeding fair, and glorious, for its size,
But, elsewhere, far out-measur'd, far outshone?
In *Fancy* (for the *fact* beyond us lies)
Canst thou not figure it, an *Isle*, almost
Too small for notice, in the *Vast* of being;
Sever'd by mighty seas of *un-built* space
From other *realms*; from ample *Continents*
Of higher life, where nobler natives dwell;
Less *Northern*, less remote from DEITY,
Glowing beneath the *Line* of the SUPREME;
Where souls in excellence make haste, put forth
Luxuriant growths; nor the late autumn wait
Of *Human* worth, but ripen soon to gods?
Yet why drown *Fancy* in such depths as these?

Return, presumptuous rover! and confess
The bounds of man; nor blame them, as too small.
Enjoy we not full scope in what is *seen?*
Full ample the dominions of the sun!
Full glorious to behold! How far, how wide,
The matchless monarch, from his flaming throne,
Lavish of lustre, throws his beams about him,
Farther, and faster, than a thought can fly,
And feeds his planets with eternal fires!
This *Heliapolis*, by greater far,
Than the proud tyrant of the *Nile*, was built;
And *He* alone, who built it, can destroy.
Beyond *this City*, why strays human thought?
One wonderful, enough for man to know!
One infinite! enough for man to range!
One firmament, enough for man to read!
O what voluminous instruction here!
What page of wisdom is deny'd him? None;
If learning his chief lesson makes him wise.
Nor is *Instruction*, here, our only gain;
There dwells a noble *pathos* in the skies,
Which warms our passions, proselytes our hearts.
How eloquently shines the glowing pole!
With what authority it gives its charge,
Remonstrating great truths in style sublime,
Though silent, loud! heard earth around; above
The planets heard; and not unheard in hell;
Hell has her wonder, though too proud to praise.
Is *Earth*, then, more infernal? Has she those,
Who neither *praise* (LORENZO!) nor *admire?*

LORENZO's admiration, pre-engag'd,
Ne'er ask'd the *Moon* one question; never held
Least correspondence with a single star:
Ne'er rear'd an altar to the *Queen of Heaven*
Walking in brightness; or her train ador'd.
Their *sublunary* rivals have long since
Engross'd his whole devotion; *Stars* malign,
Which made the fond *Astronomer* run mad;
Darken his *intellect*, corrupt his *heart*;
Cause him to sacrifice his fame and peace
To momentary madness, call'd delight.
Idolater, more gross than ever kiss'd
The lifted hand to LUNA, or pour'd out
The blood to JOVE!—O THOU, to whom belongs
All sacrifice! O Thou Great JOVE unfeign'd!
DIVINE INSTRUCTOR! Thy *first* volume, *This*,
For *Man*'s perusal; All in CAPITALS!
In *Moon*, and *Stars* (heav'n's golden alphabet!)
Emblaz'd to seize the sight; who *runs* may *read*;
Who *reads*, can *understand*. 'Tis unconfin'd
To *Christian* land, or *Jewry*; fairly writ,
In language universal, to MANKIND:
A language, Lofty to the learn'd: yet Plain
To those that feed the flock, or guide the plough,
Or, from his husk, strike out the bounding grain.
A language, worthy the GREAT MIND, that speaks!
Preface, and *Comment*, to the *Sacred Page!*
Which oft refers its reader to the skies,
As pre-supposing his first lesson *there*,
And Scripture self a *Fragment*, *That* unread.

Stupendous book of wisdom, to the wise!
Stupendous book! and open'd, NIGHT! by Thee.
By Thee *much* open'd, I confess, O *Night!*
Yet *more* I wish; but *how* shall I prevail!
Say, gentle *Night?* whose modest, maiden beams
Give us a *new* creation, and present
The world's great picture soften'd to the sight;
Nay, kinder far, far more indulgent still,
Say, thou, whose mild dominion's silver key
Unlocks our hemisphere, and sets to view
Worlds beyond number; worlds conceal'd by day
Behind the proud, and envious star of noon!
Canst thou not draw a deeper scene?—And shew
The Mighty POTENTATE, to whom belong
These rich *Regalia* pompously display'd
To kindle that high hope? Like him of *Uz*,
I gaze around; I search on ev'ry side—
O for a glimpse of HIM my soul adores!
As the chas'd hart, amid the desart waste,
Pants for the living stream; for HIM who made her,
So pants the thirsty soul, amid the blank
Of sublunary joys. Say, goddess! Where?
Where, blazes *His* bright court? Where burns *His* throne?
Thou know'st; for Thou art near Him; by Thee, round
His grand pavilion, sacred fame reports
The sable curtain drawn. If not, can none
Of thy fair daughter-train, so swift of wing,
Who travel far, discover where *He* dwells?



T. Stothard del. J. Neagle sculpt.

—— Thou, whose mild dominion's silver key
Unlocks our hemisphere, and sets to view
Worlds beyond number; ——

Page 306

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A *Star* His dwelling pointed out *below.*
Ye *Pleiades! Arcturus! Mazaroth!*
And thou, *Orion!* of still keener eye!
Say ye, who guide the wilder'd in the waves,
And bring them out of tempest into port!
On which hand must I bend my course to find *Him?*
These courtiers keep the secret of their KING;
I wake whole nights, in vain, to steal it from them.
I wake; and, waking, clim'd *Night*'s radiant scale,
From sphere to sphere; the steps by nature set
For man's ascent; at once to *tempt* and *aid;*
To *tempt* his eye, and *aid* his tow'ring thought;
Till it arrives at the *Great* GOAL of all.
In ardent *Contemplation*'s rapid car,
From *Earth,* as from my barrier, I set out.
How swift I mount! Diminish'd *Earth* recedes;
I pass the *Moon;* and, from her farther side,
Pierce heav'n's blue curtain; strike into *Remote;*
Where, with his lifted tube, the subtil sage
His artificial, airy journey takes,
And to *Celestial* lengthens *Human* sight.
I pause at ev'ry *Planet* on my road,
And ask for HIM who gives their orbs to roll,
Their foreheads fair to shine. From SATURN's ring,
In which, of *Earths* an army might be lost,
With the bold *Comet,* take my bolder flight,
Amid those *sov'reign* glories of the skies,
Of independant, native lustre, proud;
The souls of systems! and the lords of life,
Thro' their wide empires!—What behold I *now?*

A wilderness of wonder burning round;
Where *larger* suns inhabit *higher* spheres;
Perhaps the *villas* of descending gods;
Nor halt I here; my toil is but begun;
'Tis but the threshold of the DEITY;
Or, far beneath it, I am grov'ling still.
Nor is it strange; I built on a mistake:
The grandeur of his works, whence *folly* sought
For aid, to *reason* sets his glory higher;
Who built thus high for worms (mere worms to *Him*)
O where, LORENZO! must the BUILDER dwell?
Pause, then; and, for a moment, here respire—
If human thought can keep its station Here,
Where am I?—Where is *Earth?*—Nay, where art
O *Sun?*—Is the sun turn'd recluse?—And are
His boasted expeditions short to *Mine?*—
To *mine*, how short! On Nature's *Alps* I stand,
And see a thousand firmaments beneath!
A thousand systems! as a thousand grains!
So *much* a stranger, and so *late* arriv'd,
How can man's curious spirit not enquire,
What are the natives of this world sublime,
Of this so foreign, un-terrestrial sphere,
Where mortal, *untranslated*, never stray'd?
" O ye, as distant from my little home,
" As swiftest sun-beams in an age can fly!
" Far from my native element I roam,
" In quest of New, and Wonderful, to man.
" What province This, of *His* immense domain,
" Whom all obeys? Or mortals here, or gods?

" Ye bord'rers on the coast of bliss! what are you?
" A colony from heav'n? Or, only rais'd,
" By frequent visit from heav'n's neighbouring realms,
" To secondary gods, and half divine?—
" Whate'er your nature, *This* is past dispute,
" Far other life you live, far other tongue
" You talk, far other thought, perhaps, you think,
" Than men. How various are the works of God!
" But say, *What* thought? Is *Reason* here enthron'd,
" And absolute? Or *Sense* in arms agains her?
" Have you *Two* lights? Or need you no *reveal'd?*
" Enjoy your happy realms their golden age?
" And had your EDEN an abstemious EVE?
" *Our* EVE's fair daughters prove their pedigree
" And ask their ADAMS—" *Who would not be wise?*"
" Or, if your mother *fell*, are you *redeem'd?*
" And if redeem'd—is your Redeemer *scorn'd?*
" Is This your final residence? If not,
" Change you your scene, *Translated?* Or by *Death?*
" And if by *Death*; *What Death?*—Know you
" *Disease?*
" Or horrid *War*?—With war, this fatal hour,
" EUROPA groans (so call we a small field,
" Where kings run mad). In *Our* world, DEATH de-
" putes
" *Intemperance* to do the work of *Age*;
" And hanging up the quiver *Nature* gave him,
" As slow of Execution, for dispatch
" Sends forth *Imperial* butchers; bids them slay
" Their sheep (the silly sheep they fleec'd before),

" And toss him twice ten thousand at a meal.
" Sit all *your* executioners on thrones?
" With *you*, can rage for plunder make a *god?*
" And *bloodshed* wash out ev'ry other stain?—
" But You, perhaps, can't bleed: From matter gross
" Your *Spirits* clean, are delicately clad
" In fine-spun Æther, privileg'd to soar,
" Unloaded, uninfected; How unlike
" The lot of man! How few of human race
" By their own *mud* unmurder'd! How we wage
" Self-war eternal!—Is your painful day
" Of hardy conflict o'er? Or, are you still
" Raw candidates at school? And have you those
" Who disaffect *Reversions*, as with *Us?*—
" But what are *We?* You never heard of *Man;*
" Or *Earth*, the *Bedlam* of the universe!
" Where *Reason* (un-diseas'd with You) runs mad,
" And nurses *Folly*'s children as *her own*;
" Fond of the foulest. In the sacred mount
" Of *Holiness*, where reason is pronounc'd
" *Infallible*; and *thunders*, like a god;
" Ev'n *there*, by *Saints*, the *Dæmons* are outdone;
" What *These* think wrong, our *Saints* refine to right;
" And kindly teach *dull* hell her own black arts;
" SATAN, instructed, o'er their *morals* smiles.—
" But *This*, how strange to You, who know not *Man!*
" Has the least rumour of our race arriv'd?
" Call'd *here* ELIJAH in his flaming car?
" Past by you the good ENOCH, on his road
" To those fair fields, whence LUCIFER was hurl'd;

" Who brush'd, perhaps, your sphere in his descent,
" Stain'd your pure crystal Æther, or let fall
" A short eclipse from his portentous shade?
" O! that the fiend had lodg'd on some broad orb
" Athwart his way; nor reach'd his present home,
" Then blacken'd *Earth* with footsteps foul'd in hell,
" Nor wash'd in *Ocean*, as from ROME he past
" To BRITAIN'S isle; *too, too*, conspicuous *There*?"
But this is all digression: Where is HE,
That o'er heav'n's battlements the felon hurl'd
To groans, and chains, and darkness? Where is HE,
Who sees creation's summit in a vale?
HE, Whom, while man is *Man*, he can't but seek;
And if he finds, commences *more* than man?
O for a telescope his throne to reach!
Tell me, ye learn'd on *Earth!* or blest *Above!*
Ye searching, ye *Newtonian* angels! tell,
Where, your GREAT MASTER'S orb? His planets, where?
Those *conscious* Satellites, those *Morning stars*,
First-born of DEITY! from central love,
By veneration most profound, thrown off;
By sweet attraction, no less strongly drawn;
Aw'd, and yet *raptur'd; raptur'd*, yet *serene*;
Past thought illustrious, but with borrow'd beams;
In still approaching circles, still *remote*,
Revolving round the sun's eternal SIRE?
Or sent, in lines direct, on embassies
To nations—in what latitude?—Beyond
Terrestrial thought's horizon!—And on what

High errands sent?—Here *human* effort ends;
And leaves me still a stranger to *His* throne.
Full well it might! I quite mistook my road.
Born in an age more Curious than Devout;
More fond to fix the *place* of heav'n, or hell,
Than studious *this* to shun, or *that* secure.
'Tis not the *curious*, but the *pious* path,
That leads me to my point: LORENZO! know,
Without or *Star*, or *Angel*, for their guide,
Who worship GOD, shall *find* him. Humble *Love*,
And not proud *Reason*, keeps the door of heav'n;
Love finds admission, where proud *Science* fails.
Man's science is the culture of his heart;
And not to lose his plumbet in the depths
Of *Nature*, or the more profound of GOD.
Either to know, is an attempt that sets
The wisest on a level with the fool,
To fathom *Nature* (ill-attempted *Here!*)
Past doubt is deep philosophy *Above*;
Higher degrees in bliss archangels take,
As deeper learn'd; the deepest, learning still.
For, what a thunderer of omnipotence
(So might I dare to speak) is *seen* in All!
In *Man!* in *Earth!* in more amazing *Skies!*
Teaching this lesson, *Pride* is loth to learn——
"Not *deeply* to *discern*, not *much* to *know*,
"Mankind was born to WONDER, and ADORE."
And is there cause for higher *wonder* still,
Than that which struck us from our past surveys?
Yes; and for deeper *adoration* too.

From my late airy travel unconfin'd,
Have I learn'd nothing?—Yes, LORENZO! This;
Each of these stars is a religious house;
I saw their altars smoke, their incense rise;
And heard *Hosannas* ring thro' ev'ry sphere,
A seminary fraught with future gods.
Nature all o'er is *consecrated* ground,
Teeming with growths immortal, and divine.
The Great PROPRIETOR's all bounteous hand
Leaves nothing waste; but sows these fiery fields
With seeds of *reason*, which to *virtues* rise
Beneath *His* genial ray; and, if escap'd
The pestilential blasts of stubborn *will*,
When grown mature, are gather'd for the skies.
And is *Devotion* thought too much on *earth*,
When beings, so superior, homage *boast*,
And *triumph* in prostrations to THE THRONE?
  But wherefore more of planets, or of stars?
Æthereal journeys, and, discover'd there,
Ten thousand worlds, ten thousand ways devout,
All *Nature* sending incense to THE THRONE,
Except the bold LORENZOS of Our sphere?
Op'ning the solemn sources of my soul,
Since I have pour'd, like feign'd ERIDANUS,
My flowing numbers o'er the flaming skies,
Nor see, of *fancy*, or of *fact*, what more
Invites the muse.——Here turn we, and review
Our past nocturnal landscape wide:—Then say,
Say, then LORENZO! with what burst of heart,
The whole, at once, revolving in his thought,

Must man exclaim, adoring, and aghast?
" O what a root! O what a branch, is here!
" O what a Father! What a family!
" Worlds! systems! and creations!—And creations,
" In one agglomerated cluster, hung,
" *Great VINE! On THEE, on THEE the cluster hangs?
" The filial cluster! infinitely spread
" In glowing globes, with various being fraught;
" And drinks (nectarious draught!) immortal life.
" Or, shall I say (for *who* can say enough?)
" A constellation of ten thousand gems,
" (And, O! of what dimension! of what weight!)
" Set in one *Signet*, flames on the right hand,
" Of MAJESTY DIVINE! The *blazing Seal*,
" That deeply stamps, on all created *mind*,
" Indelible, *His* sovereign attributes,
" OMNIPOTENCE, and LOVE! *That*, passing bound:
" And *This*, surpassing that. Nor stop we *Here*,
" For want of *Pow'r* in GOD, but *Thought* in MAN.
" Ev'n *This* acknowledg'd, leaves us still in debt:
" If *Greater* aught, That Greater all is THINE,
" DREAD SIRE!—Accept this *Miniature* of THEE;
" And pardon an *Attempt* from mortal thought,
" In which archangels might have fail'd, unblam'd."
How such ideas of th' ALMIGHTY's *Pow'r*,
And such ideas of th' ALMIGHTY's *Plan*,
(Ideas not absurd) distend the thought
Of feeble mortals! Nor of *them* alone!
The fulness of the DEITY breaks forth

* John xv. 1.

In *Inconceivables* to men, and gods.
Think, then, O think; nor ever drop the thought;
How *low* must *Man* descend, when *Gods* adore!
Have I not, then, accomplish'd my proud boast?
Did I not tell thee, " * We would mount, LORENZO!
" And kindle our devotion at the *Stars*?"
And have I *fail'd?* And did I flatter thee?
And art all adamant? And dost confute
All urg'd, with one irrefragable *Smile?*
LORENZO! *Mirth* how miserable *here!*
Swear by the *Stars*, by HIM who made them, swear,
Thy heart, henceforth, shall be as pure as *They:*
Then *Thou*, like *Them*, shalt *shine;* like *Them*, shall *rise*
From low to lofty; from obscure to bright;
By due gradation, *Nature*'s sacred law.
The *Stars*, from whence?—Ask *Chaos*—He can tell.
These bright temptations to idolatry,
From *Darkness*, and *Confusion*, took their birth;
Sons of *Deformity!* from fluid dregs
Tartarean, first they rose to masses rude;
And then, to spheres opaque; Then dimly shone;
Then brighten'd; Then blaz'd out in *perfect day.*
Nature delights in progress; in advance
From worse to better: But, when *Minds* ascend,
Progress, in part, depends upon *themselves.*
Heav'n aids exertion; Greater makes the Great;
The *voluntary* Little lessens more.
O be a *Man!* and thou shalt be a *God!*
And *Half Self-made!*—Ambition how divine!
O Thou, ambitious of disgrace alone!

Still undevout? unkindled?—Tho' high-taught,
School'd by the skies, and pupil of the stars;
Rank coward to the fashionable world!
Art thou *asham'd* to bend thy knee to heaven?
Curst fume of pride, exhal'd from deepest hell!
Pride in *Religion* is man's highest praise.
Bent on destruction! and in love with death!
Not all these luminaries, quench'd at once,
Were half so sad, as one benighted mind,
Which gropes for happiness, and meets *despair*.
How, like a widow in her weeds, the *Night*,
Amid her glimm'ring tapers, silent sits!
How sorrowful, how desolate, she weeps
Perpetual dews, and saddens nature's scene!
A scene more sad *Sin* makes the darken'd soul,
All comfort kills, nor leaves one spark alive.
Tho' blind of heart, still open is thine eye:
Why such magnificence in all thou seest?
Of *Matter*'s grandeur, know, one end is This,
To tell the *Rational*, who gazes on it—
" Tho' *That* immensely Great, still Greater *He*,
" Whose breast, capacious, can embrace, and lodge,
" Unburden'd, nature's universal scheme;
" Can grasp *Creation* with a *single* thought;
" *Creation* grasp; and not exclude its SIRE"—
To tell him farther—" It behoves him much
" To *guard* th' important, yet depending, fate
" Of being, brighter than a thousand suns:
" One single ray of *Thought* outshines them all."—
And if man hears obedient, soon he'll soar
Superior heights, and on his purple wing,

His purple wing bedrop'd with eyes of gold,
Rising, where *Thought* is now deny'd to rise,
Look down triumphant on these dazzling spheres.
Why then persist?—No mortal ever liv'd
But, *dying*, he pronounc'd (when words are true)
The whole that charms thee, absolutely vain;
Vain, and far worse?—Think Thou, with dying men;
O *condescend* to think as angels think!
O *tolerate* a chance for happiness!
Our nature such, ill choice ensures ill fate;
And hell had been, tho' there had been no God.
Dost thou not know, my new astronomer!
Earth, turning from the *Sun*, brings night to man?
Man, turning from his *God*, brings *endless* night;
Where thou canst read no *morals*, find no *friend*,
Amend no *manners*, and expect no *peace*.
How *deep* the darkness! and the groan, how *loud!*
And far, how far, from *lambent* are the flames!—
Such is LORENZO's purchase! Such his praise!
The proud, the politic, LORENZO's praise!
Tho' in his ear, and levell'd at his heart,
I've half read o'er the volume of the skies.
For think not thou hast heard all this from *me;*
My song but echoes what great *Nature* speaks.
What has she spoken? Thus the goddess spoke,
Thus speaks for ever:—" Place, at nature's head,
" A sov'reign, which o'er all things rolls his eye,
" Extends his wing, promulgates his commands,
" But, above all, diffuses endless good;
" *To whom*, for sure redress, the wrong'd may fly;

" The vile, for mercy; and the pain'd, for peace;
" *By whom*, the various tenants of these spheres,
" Diversify'd in fortunes, place, and powers,
" Rais'd in enjoyment, as in worth they rise,
" Arrive at length (if worthy such approach)
" At that blest fountain-head, from which they stream;
" Where conflict past redoubles present joy;
" And present joy looks forward on increase;
" And That, on more; no period! ev'ry step
" A double boon! a *Promise*, and a *Bliss*."
How easy sits *this* scheme on human hearts!
It suits their make; it sooths their vast desires;
Passion is pleas'd; and *Reason* asks no more;
'Tis rational! 'tis Great!—But what is *Thine?*
It darkens! shocks! excruciates! and confounds!
Leaves us quite naked, both of help, and hope,
Sinking from bad to worse; few years, the sport
Of *Fortune;* then the morsel of *Despair.*
Say, then, LORENZO! (for thou know'st it well)
What's *Vice?*—Mere want of compass in our thought.
Religion, what?—The proof of *Common-sense.*
How art thou whooted, where the *Least* prevails!
Is it *my* fault, if *these Truths* call thee *Fool?*
And thou shalt never be *miscall'd* by me.
Can neither *Shame*, nor *Terror*, stand thy Friend?
And art thou *still* an insect in the mire?
How, like thy guardian angel, have I flown;
Snatch'd thee from earth; escorted thee thro' all
Th' ethereal armies; walkt thee, like a God,
Thro' splendors of first magnitude, arrang'd

On either hand; clouds thrown beneath thy feet;
Close-cruis'd on the bright paradise of GOD;
And almost introduc'd thee to THE THRONE!
And art thou still carousing, for delight,
Rank poison; first, fermenting to mere *froth*,
And then subsiding into final *gall?*
To beings of sublime, *immortal* make,
How shocking is all joy, whose end is sure!
Such joy, *more* shocking still, the more it *charms!*
And dost thou chuse what ends ere well-begun;
And infamous, as short? And dost thou chuse
(*Thou*, to whose palate *Glory* is so sweet)
To wade into *perdition*, thro' *contempt*,
Not of poor bigots only, but thy *own?*
For I have peep'd into thy cover'd heart,
And seen it blush beneath a boastful brow;
For, by strong guilt's most violent assault,
Conscience is but *disabled*, not *destroy'd*.
O thou most Aweful Being; and most Vain!
Thy will, how *frail!* how *glorious* is thy power!
Though dread ETERNITY has sown her seeds
Of bliss, and woe, in thy despotic breast;
Though heav'n, and hell, depend upon thy choice;
A butterfly comes cross, and both are fled.
Is this the picture of a rational?
This horrid image, shall it be most just?
LORENZO! No: It cannot,—*shall* not, be,
If there is force in *Reason*; or, in *Sounds*
Chanted beneath the glimpses of the moon,
A magic, at this planetary hour,

When *slumber* locks the gen'ral lip, and dreams
Through senseless mazes hunt souls *un-inspir'd.*
Attend—the sacred mysteries begin——
My solemn *Night-born* adjuration hear;
Hear, and I'll raise thy spirit from the dust;
While the *stars* gaze on this inchantment *new;*
Inchantment, not infernal, but Divine!
" By *Silence,* DEATH's peculiar attribute;
" By *Darkness,* GUILT's inevitable doom;
" By *Darkness,* and by *Silence,* sisters dread!
" That draw the curtain round NIGHT's ebon throne,
" And raise ideas, solemn as the scene!
" BY NIGHT, and all of aweful, Night presents
" To *Thought,* or *Sense,* (of aweful much, to both,
" The goddess brings)! BY These her trembling *Fires,*
" Like VESTA's, ever-burning; and, like *hers,*
" Sacred to thoughts immaculate, and pure!
" By these bright orators, that *prove,* and *praise,*
" And press thee to revere, the DEITY;
" Perhaps, too, aid thee, when rever'd awhile,
" To reach *his* throne; as *stages* of the soul,
" Through which, at different periods, she shall pass
" Refining gradual, for her final height,
" And purging off some dross at ev'ry sphere!
" BY this dark pall thrown o'er the silent world!
" BY the world's kings, and kingdoms, most renown'd,
" From short ambition's *zenith* set for ever;
" Sad presage to vain boasters, now in bloom!
" BY the long list of swift mortality,

" From ADAM downward to this ev'ning knell,
" Which midnight waves in *fancy*'s startled eye;
" And shocks her with an hundred centuries,
" Round *death*'s black banner throng'd, in human thought!
" BY thousands, *now*, resigning their last breath,
" And calling thee—wert thou so wise to hear!
" BY tombs o'er tombs arising; human earth
" Ejected, to make room for—human earth;
" The monarch's *terror!* and the sexton's *trade!*
" BY pompous obsequies that shun the day,
" The *torch* funereal, and the nodding *plume*,
" Which makes poor man's humiliation proud;
" Boast of our *ruin!* triumph of our *dust!*
" BY the damp vault that weeps o'er royal bones;
" And the pale lamp that shews the ghastly dead,
" *More* ghastly, through the thick incumbent gloom!
" BY visits (if there are) from darker scenes,
" The gliding spectre! and the groaning grave!
" BY groans, and graves, and miseries that groan
" For the grave's shelter! BY desponding men,
" Senseless to pains of death, from pangs of guilt!
" BY guilt's last audit! BY yon *moon* in blood,
" The rocking firmament, the falling stars,
" And thunder's last discharge, great nature's knell!
" By SECOND *chaos*; and ETERNAL *night*."—
Be WISE—Nor let PHILANDER blame my *charm*;
But own not ill-discharg'd my double debt,
Love to the living; *duty* to the dead.

For know I'm but executor; *he* left
This moral legacy; *I* make it o'er
By *his* command; PHILANDER hear in me;
And heav'n in both.—If deaf to these, Oh! hear
FLORELLO's tender voice; *his* weal depends
On *thy* resolve; it trembles at thy choice;
For *his* sake—love *thyself:* example strikes
All human hearts; a *bad* example more;
More still a Father's; that ensures his ruin.
As parent of his being, wouldst thou prove
Th' unnatural parent of his miseries,
And make him curse the being which thou gav'st?
Is *this* the blessing of so fond a father?
If careless of LORENZO! spare, Oh! spare
FLORELLO's father, and PHILANDER's friend!
FLORELLO's father ruin'd, ruins Him;
And from PHILANDER's friend the world expects
A conduct, no dishonour to the dead.
Let *passion* do, what *nobler motive* should;
Let *love*, and *emulation*, rise in aid
To *reason*; and persuade thee to be—blest.
This seems not a request to be deny'd;
Yet (such th' infatuation of mankind!)
'Tis the most *hopeless*, man can make to man.
Shall I then rise, in argument, and warmth?
And urge PHILANDER's posthumous advice,
From topics yet unbroach'd?——
But Oh! I faint! My spirits fail!—Nor strange!
So long on wing, and in no middle clime!
To which my great CREATOR's glory call'd:

And *calls*—but, now, in vain. *Sleep*'s dewy wand
Has strok'd my drooping lids, and *promises*
My long arrear of rest; the *downy god*
(Wont to return with our returning *peace)*
Will *pay*, ere long, and bless me with repose.
Haste, haste, sweet stranger! from the peasant's cot,
The ship-boy's hammock, or the soldier's straw,
Whence *sorrow* never chas'd thee; with thee bring,
Not hideous visions, as of late; but draughts
Delicious of well-tasted, cordial, rest;
Man's rich restorative; his balmy bath,
That supples, lubricates, and keeps in play
The various movements of this nice machine,
Which asks such frequent periods of repair.
When tir'd with vain rotations of the day,
Sleep winds us up for the succeeding dawn;
Fresh we spin on, till *sickness* clogs our wheels,
Or *death* quite breaks the spring, and motion ends.
When will it end with me?

——" THOU only know'st,
" THOU, whose broad eye the *future*, and the *past*,
" Joins to the *present*; making one of *three*
" To moral thought! THOU know'st, and THOU alone,
" All-knowing!—All unknown!—And yet well-known!
" Near, tho' remote! and, tho' unfathom'd, felt!
" And, tho' invisible, for ever seen!
" And seen in all! the *great* and the *minute:*
" Each globe above, with its gigantic race,

" Each flow'r, each leaf, with its small people swarm'd,
" (Those puny vouchers of OMNIPOTENCE !)
" To the first thought, that asks, " *From whence ?*"
declare
" Their common source. THOU Fountain, running
o'er
" In rivers of communicated joy !
" Who gav'st us speech for far, far humbler themes !
" Say, by what name shall I presume to call
" HIM I see burning in these countless suns,
" As *Moses*, in the *bush ?* ILLUSTRIOUS MIND !
" The whole creation, less, far less, to Thee,
" Than *that* to the creation's ample round.
" How shall I name THEE ?—How my labouring soul
" Heaves underneath the thought, too big for birth !
" Great system of perfections ! Mighty Cause
" Of causes mighty ! Cause uncaus'd ! Sole Root
" Of *nature*, that luxuriant growth of GOD !
" First Father of *effects !* that progeny
" Of endless series ; where the golden chain's
" Last link admits a period, who can tell ?
" Father of all that is or heard, or hears !
" Father of all that is or seen, or sees !
" Father of all that *is*, or *shall* arise !
" Father of this immeasurable mass
" Of *matter* multiform ; or dense, or rare ;
" Opaque, or lucid ; rapid, or at rest ;
" Minute, or passing bound ! in each extreme
" Of like amaze, and mystery, to man.
" Father of these bright millions of the *night!*

" Of which the least full Godhead had proclaim'd,
" And thrown the gazer on his knee—Or, say,
" Is appellation higher still, Thy choice?
" Father of *matter*'s temporary lords!
" Father of *spirits!* nobler offspring! sparks
" Of high paternal glory; rich endow'd
" With various measures, and with various modes
" Of *instinct, reason, intuition*; beams
" More pale, or bright from *day divine*, to break
" The dark of matter *organiz'd* (the ware
" Of all *created* spirit); beams, that rise
" Each over other in superior light,
" Till the last ripens into lustre strong,
" Of next approach to GODHEAD. Father fond
" (Far fonder than e'er bore that name on earth)
" Of *intellectual* beings! beings blest
" With pow'rs to please THEE; not of passive ply
" To laws they know not; beings lodg'd in seats
" Of well-adapted joys, in different domes
" Of this imperial palace for thy sons;
" Of this proud, populous, well-policy'd,
" Though boundless habitation, plann'd by THEE;
" Whose several clans their several climates suit;
" And transposition, doubtless, would destroy.
" Or, Oh! indulge, immortal KING, indulge
" A title, less august indeed, but more
" Endearing; ah! how sweet in human ears!
" Sweet in our ears, and triumph in our hearts!
" *Father of immortality to man!*

" A theme that * lately set my soul on fire—
" And THOU the NEXT ! yet equal ! THOU, by whom
" *That* blessing was convey'd; far more ! was *bought;*
" Ineffable the price ! by whom all worlds
" Were made; and one redeem'd ! illustrious Light
" From Light illustrious ! THOU, whose *regal* power,
" Finite in *time*, but infinite in *space*,
" On more than adamantine basis fix'd,
" O'er more, far more, than diadems, and thrones,
" Inviolably reigns; the *Dread* of gods !
" And Oh ! the *Friend* of man ! beneath whose foot,
" And by the mandate of whose awful nod,
" All regions, revolutions, fortunes, fates,
" Of high, of low, of mind, and matter, roll
" Through the short channels of expiring *time*,
" Or shoreless ocean of eternity,
" Calm, or tempestuous (as *thy* Spirit breathes),
" In absolute subjection !—And, O THOU
" The glorious THIRD ! Distinct, not separate !
" Beaming from *Both !* with Both incorporate;
" And (strange to tell !) incorporate with dust !
" By condescension, as Thy glory, great,
" Enshrin'd in man ! Of human hearts, if pure,
" Divine inhabitant ! The tie divine
" Of heav'n with distant earth ! by whom, I trust,
" (If not inspir'd) uncensur'd this address
" To THEE, to THEM—To whom ?—Mysterious power;
" Reveal'd—yet unreveal'd ! Darkness in light;

* Nights the Sixth and Seventh.

" Number in unity! our Joy! our Dread!
" The *Triple* Bolt that lays all wrong in ruin!
" That animates all right, the *Triple* sun!
" Sun of the soul! her never-setting sun!
" Triune, Unutterable, Unconceiv'd,
" Absconding, yet Demonstrable, GREAT GOD!
" Greater than Greatest! Better than the Best!
" Kinder than kindest! with soft *pity*'s eye,
" Or (stronger still to speak it) with *Thine Own*,
" From Thy bright home, from that high Firmament,
" Where THOU, from all eternity, hast dwelt;
" Beyond archangels unassisted ken;
" From far above what mortals highest call;
" From elevation's pinnacle; look down,
" Through—What? Confounding interval! Thro' all
" And more than lab'ring *fancy* can conceive;
" Through radiant ranks of essences unknown;
" Through hierarchies from hierarchies detach'd
" Round various banners of OMNIPOTENCE,
" With endless change of rapturous duties fir'd;
" Through wond'rous beings interposing swarms,
" All clustering at the call, to dwell in THEE;
" Through this wide waste of worlds! this *vista* vast,
" All sanded o'er with suns; suns turn'd to *night*
" Before *thy* feeblest beam—Look down—down—
down,
" On a poor *breathing particle* in dust,
" Or, lower, an *immortal* in his crimes.
" His crimes forgive! forgive his virtues, too!
" Those smaller faults, half-converts to the right.

" Nor let me close these eyes, which never more
" May see the sun (though night's descending scale
" Now weighs up morn), unpity'd, and unblest!
" In *Thy* displeasure dwells *eternal* pain;
" Pain, our aversion; pain, which strikes me *now;*
" And, since all pain is terrible to man,
" Though transient, terrible; at *Thy* good hour,
" Gently, ah gently, lay me in my bed,
" My *clay-cold bed!* by nature, now, so near;
" By nature, near; still nearer by disease!
" Till then, be *this*, an emblem of my grave:
" Let it out-preach the preacher; ev'ry night
" Let it out-cry the boy at PHILIP's ear;
" That tongue of death! that herald of the tomb!
" And when (the shelter of thy wing implor'd)
" My *senses*, sooth'd, shall sink in soft repose,
" O sink *this* truth still deeper in my soul,
" Suggested by my pillow, sign'd by *fate*,
" First, in *fate*'s volume, at the page of *man*—
" *Man's sickly soul, though turn'd and toss'd for ever,*
" *From side to side, can rest on nought but* THEE:
" *Here, in full trust, hereafter, in full joy;*
" On THEE, the promis'd, sure, eternal down
" Of spirits, toil'd in travel through this vale.
" Nor of *that* pillow shall *my* soul despond;
" For—Love almighty! Love almighty! (sing,
" Exult, creation!) Love almighty, reigns!
" That death of *death!* that cordial of *despair!*
" And loud ETERNITY's triumphant song!

Of whom, no more:—For, O Thou PATRON-GOD!
" Thou *God* and *Mortal!* Thence *more* GOD to man!
" Man's theme eternal! man's eternal theme!
" THOU can'st not 'scape *uninjur'd* from our *praise.*
" Uninjur'd from our praise can HE escape,
" Who, disembosom'd from the FATHER, bows
" The heav'n of heav'ns, to kiss the distant earth!
" Breathes out in agonies a sinless soul!
" Against the *Cross, Death*'s iron sceptre breaks!
" From famish'd *ruin* plucks her human prey!
" Throws wide the gates celestial to his *foes!*
" Their *gratitude,* for such a boundless debt,
" Deputes their *suff'ring brothers* to receive!
" And, if deep human guilt in payment fails;
" As deeper guilt prohibits our *despair!*
" Injoins it, as our duty, to *rejoice!*
" And (to close all) omnipotently kind,
" * *Takes his delights among the sons of men.*"
What words are these--And did they come from heav'n?
And were they spoke to man? to guilty man?
What are all mysteries to love like this?
The songs of angels, all the melodies
Of choral gods, are wafted in the sound;
Heal and exhilirate the broken heart;
Though plung'd, before, in horrors dark as *night:*
Rich prelibation of *consummate* joy!
Nor wait we dissolution to be blest.
This final effort of the moral muse,
How justly † *titled?* Nor for me alone:

* Prov. chap. viii. † The CONSOLATION.

For all that read; what spirit of support,
What heights of CONSOLATION, crown my song!
Then, Farewell NIGHT! Of darkness, now, no more:
Joy breaks; shines; triumphs; 'tis eternal day.
Shall that which rises out of *nought* complain
Of a few evils, paid with endless joys?
My soul! henceforth, in sweetest union join
The two supports of human happiness,
Which some erroneous, think can never meet;
True *taste of life*, and constant *thought of death!*
The *thought* of death, sole victor of its *dread!*
Hope, be thy *joy;* and *probity* thy *skill;*
Thy *patron* HE, whose diadem has dropp'd
Yon gems of heav'n; *Eternity*, thy *prize:*
And leave the racers of the *world* their own,
Their feather, and their froth, for endless toils:
They part with all for that *which is not bread;*
They mortify, they starve, on wealth, fame, power;
And laugh to scorn the *fools* that aim at more.
How must a spirit, late escap'd from earth,
Suppose PHILANDER'S, LUCIA'S, or NARCISSA'S,
The *truth of things* new-blazing in its eye,
Look back, astonish'd, on the ways of men,
Whose lives whole drift is to forget their graves!
And when our *present privilege* is past,
To scourge us with due sense of its *abuse;*
The *same* astonishment will seize us all.
What *then* must pain us, would preserve us *now.*
LORENZO! 'tis not yet too late; LORENZO!
Seize wisdom, ere 'tis torment to be wise;
That is, seize *wisdom*, ere she seizes *thee.*

For what, my small philosopher! is *hell?*
'Tis nothing but full knowledge of *the truth,*
When *truth,* resisted long, is sworn our foe;
And calls ETERNITY to do her right.
Thus, *darkness* aiding intellectual light,
And sacred *silence* whisp'ring truths divine,
And *truths divine* converting pain to peace,
My song the midnight raven has outwing'd,
And shot, ambitious of unbounded scenes,
Beyond the flaming limits of the world,
Her gloomy flight. But what avails the flight
Of *fancy,* when our *hearts* remain below?
Virtue abounds in flatterers, and foes;
'Tis pride, to praise her; penance, to perform.
To more than words, to more than worth of tongue,
LORENZO! rise at this auspicious hour;
An hour, when heav'n's most intimate with man;
When, like a fallen star, the ray divine
Glides swift into the bosom of the *just;*
And just are all, *determin'd* to reclaim;
Which sets that title high within thy reach.
Awake, then: thy PHILANDER calls: awake!
Thou, who shalt wake, when the creation sleeps;
When, like a taper, all these suns expire;
When TIME, like him of *Gaza* in his wrath,
Plucking the pillars that support the world,
In NATURE's ample ruins lies intomb'd;
And MIDNIGHT, *Universal* Midnight! reigns.

END OF THE NIGHT-THOUGHTS.

THE

CENTAUR

NOT

FABULOUS.

IN

SIX LETTERS TO A FRIEND,

ON THE

LIFE IN VOGUE.

Doth he not speak Parables? Ezek.

Letter
I. ON INFIDELITY.
II. ON PLEASURE.
III. ON PLEASURE, in Answer to One received.
IV. ON PLEASURE.
V. LIFE's REVIEW.
VI. THE DIGNITY OF MAN.
THE CENTAURS RESTORATION TO HUMANITY.
THE DIGNITY OF MAN RESUMED.
THE CONCLUSION.

TO THE

LADY * * * * * *

MADAM,

YOUR Ladyship's character is so well known, that the public would blame me if I presented not these papers to You, who can so readily put them into the hands of those who want them most.

You will, probably, ask, why *The* CENTAUR is prefix'd as a title to them. The *men of pleasure*, the licentious, and profligate, are the subject of these letters; and in such, as in the fabled Centaur, *the brute runs away with the man:* Therefore I call them *Centaurs.* And farther, I call them Centaurs *not fabulous*, because by their scarce half-human conduct, and character, that enigmatical, and purely ideal figure of the antients, is not unriddled only, but *realized.*

Your ladyship's curiosity is great; and you, possibly, are willing to know what account antiquity gives of the family, or rather breed, of the *Centaurs.* It is as follows.

Of the Centaurs the most celebrated was CHIRON. He was a great botanist; and our bitter herb Centory takes its name from him. He thought all herbs bitter, because, being very amorous, he could not find any amongst them, that could abate the fever in his blood: and he left a complaint in the Greek language to that purpose; which Ovid, sick of the same disease, has translated, and transmitted to posterity in his works.

But he was not only a botanist, but a great master of music: he composed an exquisite piece of harmony for young Achilles his pupil, which charm'd Deidamia to his embraces; by whom he had Pyrrhus, in the court of her father Nicomedes, a little before he dropped his petticoats, and put on his boots for the Trojan war. But what will endear to your ladyship CHIRON's memory beyond any the most re-

nowned in story is, that he was not only the venerable father of OPERAS, but was also the son of a MASQUERADE; the very first of those numerous sons, with which that prolific entertainment has since multiply'd mankind.

It happened thus: SATURN, false to his good wife OPS, had an intrigue with PHILLYRA. Seeing, one day, his injur'd spouse coming to disturb their intimacy, for escape, he turned himself into a HORSE; which occasioned the noble equestrian figure of CHIRON, his son.

This, madam, was the very first of MASQUERADES. You see the *virtuous* occasion, and the *laudable* fruits of it. Jupiter's masquerading in the form of a BULL, was long after. Europe takes its name from EUROPA, with whom he ran away in that shape. And your friend Clodius says, that probably, we celebrate HORNED MASQUERADES in memory of it. This is the recorded origin of that nocturnal assembly; and, indeed, it is evident to common sense, that the masquerade had never existed, but for its *then* accidental, and *since* established, subserviency to love.

These, you will say, are wild fables; but they are not without their morals. This fable of Saturn and Ops means, that, jealous CONSCIENCE, the Soul's lawful wife, will ever disturb *licentious* pleasure; and that there is no means of escaping the persecution, but by becoming quite *brutal* in it. This, and the following explanations of the mystical part of antiquity, have been overlooked by former commentators, though BACON was among them.

There is a second moral in the present fable. CHIRON, Madam, was a *man*, as much, I mean, as the gayer part of your acquaintance. Why then is he represented as a *Centaur?* For two reasons. He was, as I have said before, the son of Saturn; and a very lewd old fellow. Representing him as a Centaur, signifies, that beings of origin truly celestial, may debase their nature, forfeit their character, and sink themselves, by licentiousness, into perfect beasts.

Secondly, it signifies, that the rest of the species, the sober part of mankind, *prejudiced* by the abandoned manners of such men, may naturally *imagine*, that they hear them neighing after their wives and daughters; galloping with more than human haste after temptations;

and, therefore, rather insolently prancing on four legs, than decently content with two. This, probably, is the meaning; first, because *prejudice* greatly hurts our discernment, and transforms objects exceedingly. Secondly, because all allow that a Centaur is a mere creature of the *imagination*.

But though CHIRON was the most celebrated, yet he was not the most antient, of our mythological cavalry. IXION was a primitive man of pleasure; a gallant of Juno, and much in favour. Jupiter, less in his interest, interpos'd a cloud in her stead, which not long after was brought to bed of the first Centaurs. From that hour Juno commenced a scold; and in that character Virgil makes her swear, that if she can't find friends in heaven, she will ransack hell for them.

The amour of IXION imports the great *height* of our expectation, and as great *depth* of our disappointment, in illicit love. And JUPITER's interposing the cloud, intimates, that *heaven* decrees this disappointment; and that therefore it is madness to flatter ourselves with hopes of the contrary. The fable would farther teach us, that our imagination, fired by passion, imposes not only on our understandings, but our very *senses*; which take clouds for goddesses; and adore darkness as divine.

You see, madam, that gallantry is hereditary in this illustrious *house*, I should say STABLE: That therefore continence may be construed as an argument of bastardy. Who then can blame your gay friends for being loth to be bastardized, and disinherited; to lose honour, patrimony, and mistress, together?

They keep clear of this Imputation: but there is one particular, that speaks not so much in their favour; but rather calls their legitimacy in question. How comes it to pass that the posterity of cloud-begotten Sires should be so cloudless a generation, that not one spot of Stupidity can be found about them?

But though *spotless* in this point, they are not so in another; which may set all right again. DEIANIRA, as a charm to regain the love of her husband HERCULES, who was gone astray after OMPHALE, queen of Lydia, sent him a shirt dipp'd in the blood of the Centaur NESSUS. But instead of answering her honest end, it gave him a distemper so virulent, that it proved mortal. To balance the disadvantage above,

some say, this distemper, at certain seasons, still runs in his *race*. Others rob our modern Centaurs of that credit; imputing their disorder to another cause. And indeed, the present story tells us, that ladies may convey somewhat else, when they mean only to make a present of their love.

But *worse* than *distemper* is to be feared. You know, madam, Ixion's remarkable punishment; but probably, not the full import of it. Jupiter, for the father's sake, detesting his whole *posterity*, design'd Ixion's *wheel*, not only as an emblem of their endless *rotation* in unaltered circles of present pleasures; but also, as a *prophecy* of their future *pains*; and an exact representation of that rack, which, prudes say, they deserve for their family feats.

And now, madam, all things considered, have I named them wrong? I have named them, as most men of antient renown were, from their personal qualities and exploits. If you still think me to blame, I flatter myself you will change your mind, when you have read the letters following.

This address to your ladyship, will my sober reader say, is itself a *Centaur* of the Pegasean kind, in which the untamed imagination has too much run away with the judgment, and carried it to enormous heights. If your ladyship will venture, however, to be my fellow-traveller, I promise to carry you safely to an eminence in Fairy-land, from whence you shall survey the most surprising and amusing scene. To comply with your taste, it shall even be a ludicrous one. Your favourite Centaurs shall be permitted to intrude even into the most solemn groves of sacred meditation. Their grotesque figures shall continually meet your eye, where you the least expect, and where the severest critic, and the prude (all but Centauresses are prudes with you) will be most scandalized to find them.

As a pledge of this promise, accept of my frontispiece. It offers a sketch which your ladyship, who know our Centaurs secret accomplishments better than I do, may employ a better hand to perfect.

The statues of the renown'd are set up in public, to kindle honest emulation. In most antient schools of wisdom were the busts, or portraits of the wise. What, madam, if, for your modern academy, *Hogarth* should draw a Centaur, not, as usual, with his bow and arrow, but (what will hit my mark as well) with Harlequin's sabre by

his side; in a party-colour'd jacket of pictur'd cards, a band of music before, a Scaramouch-demon behind him; a weathercock on his head, a rattle in his hand, the decalogue under his feet; and for the benefi of *your scholars*, a label out of his mouth, inscrib'd, as was the temple of Apollo, with Γνῶθι σεαυτὸν, in letters of gold [In ME, Know thyself]: *they*, your scholars, will take it in the true philosophic sense, and wonder how it came into the mouth of so ridiculous, and, to them, so foreign, a monster.

As your ladyship's assembly, of *all* our hyppodromes is the most renown'd, I hope you will favourably accept the wholesome provender I send you. It is of an anticircean nature; and may, possibly, turn your monsters into men.

But I detain you: it is SUNDAY NIGHT: and I hear a whole string of your high bred, unbridled colts coming in full career; with a blaze in their foreheads, to outbrazen my rebukes: and a spring in their heels to bound high at your balls.

Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum.

This, madam, you understand better than they. But you begin to frown, as you always do at praise. Fear not; not one word of compliment shall you have from me during our whole journey. I shall carry you at first a heavy trot through rough unbeaten ways, entertaining you unpolitely, with discourse quite foreign to your way of thinking; such as passed in correspondence between me and a friend, that would equally despise, and be despised, among such as you think yours. In the progress of our travels (which I must honestly tell you, will only touch upon, not terminate in, Fairy-land) I shall carry you into an unknown country, where every thing is real, bright, and transporting. If there, compelled by the force of sovereign truth, I should not only assert, but convincingly prove, that you are of rank more than imperial, and present you with an *unflattering* glass, in which, notwithstanding, your own form shall appear with all the charms of an angel——But some breathing time is necessary to prepare for such an arduous expedition. Therefore, I dismount for the present, and say no more.

I am,

MADAM, &c.

THE

CENTAUR NOT FABULOUS.

LETTER I.

ON INFIDELITY.

DEAR SIR,

MAKE no apology for your request; the *world* is your apology. The occasion calls louder on me, than my *friend* can possibly do; and robs me of the credit of having my compliance owing intirely to your desire. Alarm'd at our reigning passion for PLEASURE, you press me to write on that subject. Who can forbear? since, if the present canine appetite for it should increase, where is that Bedlam which can receive a whole nation into proper methods of cure?

Your enjoining me one task has engaged me in two. Prevails not INFIDELITY as much as *Pleasure*? And for ever they must prevail, or decrease together. *Infidelity* is the parent of the love of Pleasure in some: *Eve* doubted, and then eat: It is the consequence of it in others; most of Eve's daughters first taste, and then

disbelieve. Pleasure, and Infidelity, reciprocally generate each other; and that necessarily. For Faith is intirely the result of Reason; and reason is impotent in proportion to the prevalence of sense; therefore sensual Pleasure begets Infidelity. On the reverse, he that disbelieves a futurity, must be fond of the present, and eagerly swallow its unrival'd delights; and therefore, Infidelity lets loose the reign to Pleasure, and gives it an ample range: He then, who would reduce one, must strike at both. *Eve*, and the serpent, fell together; Pleasure, like the first, plucks the forbidden fruit; and Infidelity says, with the latter, *Thou shalt not surely die.*

These two, *now* national distempers, fairly divide us between them. One seizes the body; one, the mind: and where these two fiery darts have taken place, the destroyer may spare a third: his work is done. What then must be mine? The task is hard to extract them; for they seem, at present, to be not only poisoned, but barbed, arrows, in the British heart.

However, I shall attempt, first, to make the *Infidel*, and then the *Voluptuary*, sensible of his error. I shall recommend Belief and Virtue, in the room of Doubt and Dissoluteness; and by (I hope) properly adapted *Devotion*, assist their Repentance; that necessary step of transition from one of these states, to the other. And considering into whose hands these letters will *first* come (for I design them for the press) with regard to yourself, I shall give you your friend *Eusebius*'s character at large. And with regard to your sister, I shall

invite her, and her gay favourites, to a Funeral, instead of a Ball; and, then, I shall enter on subjects not unimportant, nor foreign to these.

As the mind is our superior part, I shall first speak of INFIDELITY, and then of PLEASURE. And it shall be my endeavour so to speak of both, as to render it the province of *wit*, rather than *wisdom*, to reply. What may silence wisdom will but provoke wit, whose ambition it is to say most where least is to be said. You may as well attempt to silence an echo by the strength of voice, as a wit by the force of reason. They both are but the louder for it: they both will have the last word. How often hear we men with great ingenuity supporting folly? that is, by wit destroying wisdom; as the same sort of men by pleasure destroy happiness; prone to draw evil out of good, and set things at variance, which, by nature, are allies. Happiness, and pleasure, as wisdom, and wit, are each other's friends, or foes; and if foes, of foes the worst. Well-chosen pleasure is a branch of happiness; well-judging wit is a flower of wisdom: but when these petty subalterns set up for themselves, and counteract their principals, one makes a greater wretch, and the other a grosser fool, than could exist without them: Pleasure *then* calls for our compassion, and wit for our contempt. Of how many might the names have slept in safety, had not their unlucky parts awakened a just clamour against them?

Have we not a recent, and signal instance how far wit can set wisdom at defiance, and, with its artful

brilliances, dazzle common understandings? That noble author* smiles at a certain text of which I shall make a serious use, *viz. When the sons of God came in to the daughters of Men, they begot giants.* So when great talents fall in love with mean purposes, they beget errors of an enormous size, both in opinion, and in life. What more enormous than to let Infidelity gather such strength, even in our decline, as to stand the terrors of a death-bed, and bequeath proud legacies of its poison to the world? Is not this stretching out our boldness even beyond the day of trial? carrying the war into the very borders (if I may so speak) of that *dread Being* we dare oppose? and desperately presuming to atchieve that in our grave, of which a *Julian*, of equal genius, tho' not of equal guilt, despaired on a throne; and that the greatest on earth? Julian was for defeating one prophecy; my lord is for expunging them all; and, with like success, *Vicisti Galilæe*, may serve for both.

Take I too great a freedom? It is both folly and vice, to bear any man ill-will. But it is also folly and vice, not so to behave, when occasion requires, as that our conduct may be *mistaken* for ill-will, if the prejudiced think fit. Why should our opponents call that *ill-will*, which they, if they were of our opinion, and thought us in a fatal error, and heartily wished us well, would, necessarily, do out of perfect love? If the viscount's admirers resent out of zeal to his honour, I assure them, (though I have had no apparition) that

* Lord Bolingbroke.

his lordship, *now* on my side, thanks them not for the favour.

Time was, when those errors, into which he fell, would have been more excusable. For, that truth was obscure, and falsehood specious, and opinions endless; and that in these circumstances the mind of man could find no rest, because suspence is anxious, and assent almost inevitably betrayed into mistake; *this* was the sad and just complaint of the heathen world, which by God's dereliction had lost its way, and could not regain it, by the feeble glimmering of natural light.

But of what have *we* to complain, who grope, and wander, and stumble, at noon-day? Ours is not ignorance, but perverseness; not want of a guide, but defection from him. Our noble author, so much admired, because too much in the wrong, declares our light to be darkness; and with the boasted acuteness of his superior understanding, instead of couching those that are blind, is for putting out the eyes of those that see. Thus heaven's supreme blessing on us in the Gospel, is not annulled only, by our perverseness; but turned to much hurt. We are favour'd to our misfortune, we are enrich'd to our loss.

The heathens courted truth as a mistress, with warm, and sincere addresses, but could not obtain her. We, having obtain'd her, treat her, as an abandon'd age the lawful partners of their beds, with satiety, and disgust, and a wild desire after new embraces. And what have we embraced? *Thus* runs at best the palatable

doctrine of an age too knowing to need instruction; and too proud to bear it from heaven itself.

" Whatever notices of duty to God, or man, are im-
" printed in us by nature, or deduced by reason, these
" are obliging and necessary to be performed by all;
" as the natural religion: but as for any positive in-
" stitutions, or particular forms of religion, these are
" of human origin, stampt in the political mints of
" craft, interest, or ambition; a coin current for the
" vulgar only." It is fit, it seems, that the vulgar should be fettered, that their superiors may expatiate more at large, and not fear to meet with rivals in them. And, indeed, if the vulgar had the same principles, and opinions, with many of their masters, their masters would have as fair a chance to have their throats cut, as the murderer to be hanged for it.

As to God, they say, " The natural religion com-
" mands us to think worthily, and speak reverently, of
" Him: but, as some have thought churches deroga-
" tory to the notions of an Omnipresent Being; so
" formal prayers, and solemn services, are no way ne-
" cessary to a Being Omniscient." They present Him (if with any) with a more sublime and philosophical devotion, stripped of all externals, invisible as the Deity himself, and, indeed, as incomprehensible to the multitude; whose religion, like themselves, must have a *body* as well as a *soul;* or it will evaporate into nothing. Thus, under pretence of a compliment to *one* divine attribute, they rob *all* of the worship due to them. They pretend to give God exalted homage, as

the Jews arrayed our blessed Lord in a purple robe, to mock him, not adore. And here our undissembled neglect, if not contempt, of religion, and our barefaced venality setting all, even souls, to sale, cannot but recal to mind, that these sister iniquities, as if naturally connected, went hand-in-hand (as the historian tells us), towards the ruin of the *Roman* common-wealth.

Deos negligere, omnia venalia habere.——SALLUST.

As to the duties of the second table, they tell us, that "the precepts of nature run evidently against injuries, "and injustice; we must by no means commit rapine, "or murder; these are unsociable crimes: but as for "any pleasureable enjoyments of ourselves, why de-"prive ourselves of these? why starve at a feast hea-"ven sets before us? We cannot conceive God to be "a tyrant; to what end has he given desires, but that "we should satisfy them! or appetites, but that we "should indulge them? Anger and lust, if constitu-"tional, are venial sins."

Thus the sluices are set open for all sensuality, promiscuous incontinence, and studied arts of excess, to pour in uncontrouled: and by a second compliment to the Deity, as sincere as my lord's pretended regard for Christianity, is varnished over a second violation of his laws. Bacchus, and Venus, are recalled to a new apotheosis under a christian æra; and receive daily sacrifice in the fortunes, health, and common dignity of man. What voluntary victims are we? And as

victims of old were crowned with flowers, how *gayly* does poor, devoted, *Britain* bleed at their altars?

In answer to their pleas, it must be observed, that desires and appetites were not given us out of tyranny, but with an intention doubly kind; as a means both of pleasure, and virtue, if gratified, and restrained, as religion directs. In both views they are blessings, but greatest in the last; yet an *Esau* will ever be for preferring the former.

Thus you see, Sir, that both the tables of the decalogue are broken, in a more terrible sense, than they were by Moses, at his descent from the mount; and from no dissimilar cause. The sufficiency of human reason is the golden calf which these men set up to be worshipped; and in the frenzies of their extravagant devotion to it, they trample on venerable authority; strike at an oak with an osier; the doctrine of God's own planting, and the growth of ages, with the sudden and fortuitous shoots of imagination; abortive births of an hour. These human improvements on divine revelation may be compared to the prophaning the holy Bible with the figure of heathen idols, under *Antiochus Epiphanes*; or rather to the proud *Roman* emperor, who took the head from Jupiter's statue, and placed his own in its stead. These are bold men; but the boldest, we hope, may be reclaimed. That Almighty finger which wrote the divine laws twice in stone, cannot want power to give them a new impression in their apostate hearts.

And that they may the more willingly receive that impression, I shall observe, that setting aside the immoral consequences of infidelity, *faith* is necessary on its own account, without relation to any thing else. Faith is not only a means of obeying, but a principal act of obedience. It is not only a needful foundation; it is not only as an altar, on which to sacrifice; but it is a sacrifice itself; and, perhaps, of all the greatest. It is a submission of our understandings, an oblation of our idolized reason, to God; which he requires so indispensably, that our whole will, and affections, tho' seemingly a larger sacrifice, will not, without it, be received at our hands.

Does any question this? His lordship's disciples will be very apt to question it; yet this is true; unless we can suppose the primitive martyrs to have laid down their lives for what was unnecessary to their salvation. For it was not an attestation of their doctrine, but their faith, for which the blessed apostles were persecuted, and the martyrs shed their blood; which they might easily have avoided, if they had insisted only on the *moral* precepts of their new dispensation. Their moral precepts were approved, and welcomed, by the wisest on earth. Nay, our infidels compliment them, especially when they would give themselves the greater weight in their opposition to our creed; yet, possibly, they had rather subscribe that absurd creed, than stand obliged to practise that morality, which they so much commend.

To renounce, or corrupt, the faith (one, or both of

which is my lord's point) abstracted from libertine gratifications to follow, or to get rid of fear from those past; there seems to be so little temptation, that I should think none would venture on it, but thro' ignorance of its guilt. Its guilt therefore I have pointed out; which shews that modern deism, how laudable soever the deist's life is, is criminal in itself. A virtuous life, rising from a corrupted faith (if that could possibly be), is as an angel of light supported by a cloven foot; which many seem not to believe, otherwise they would not be so often pleading the virtue of deists, as a full absolution of that sect: whereas we are expressly told, that the *just shall live by faith*; that is, even the just shall not live, that is, be saved, without it.

But tho' a corrupt faith is sufficiently criminal in itself, yet its guilt rarely rests there; it often produces an irregular life. On the contrary, vicious practice is sure to produce a corrupt faith; or an absolute renunciation of all belief: for the notices of good and ill are so fairly imprinted on our nature, and the practice of them is so strongly guarded by consequent hope and fear, that no conscience is so hardened, as to sin without the shelter of some pretence. The guilty hush conscience with such soft whispers as these; Either, heaven takes not such cognizance of our actions; or, is not so much concerned about them, as some imagine; or, its mercy will not suffer it to be just; or its justice will not suffer it to be so severe, as to punish temporal guilt with eternal pain: all which are corruptions of the faith. Or if these opiates will not do, they proceed

to *renounce* the faith. They give themselves a quite quieting draught of absolute unbelief: a Deity is a dream, and Religion a cheat. And thus they throw off their fears, their God, and common sense, together; and are deplorably gay, till they are irremediably undone. How happy might such wretches be, if they knew what a trifle *pleasure* is to *peace!* A very trifle is it, even when pleasure is innocent: but when not, when pleasure is an enemy to peace: then, then indeed, it is a trifle no more.

There is a text which must give some surprize to those who doubt whether a bad life occasions a *false* or *no* belief. It is said, there *must* be heresies, that is, false beliefs. And why? There is certainly no fatal necessity for them, from God's destination—No; but there is a *moral* necessity for them from man's corruption. A heart boiling with violent and vicious passions, will send up infatuating fumes to the head; and a delirious giddiness of head will make a man fall into the grossest mistakes, be his natural abilities what they will. A lewd and obstinate will fails not to blind the strongest judgment, as *Delilah* the man of might.

Many, even of those that hold fast the faith, may, perhaps, not have observed, that faith is doubly precious; it is our duty, and our refuge; nay, it is *doubly* our refuge. It rescues our passions from flaming into vice; and it rescues our understanding from darkening into errors. The same qualification which is necessary for us in order to please God, is as necessary to secure ourselves from imposture; and not only from such im-

postures as *others* may prepare for us, but from our *own*. It is our sole security against our framing impositions to deceive our own judgments (as shewn above), as well as against our incurring crimes to defeat our own salvation.

As to the mysterious articles of our faith, which infidels would by no means have me forget; "Who," say they, "can swallow them?" In truth, none but those who think it no dishonour to their understandings to credit their Creator. *Socinus*, like our infidels, was one of a narrow throat; and, out of generous compassion to the Scriptures (which the world, it seems, had misunderstood for 1500 years) was for weeding them of their mysteries! and rendering them, in the plenitude of his infallible reason, undisgusting, and palatable to all the *rational* part of mankind. Why should honest Jews and Turks be frighted from us by the Trinity? he was for making religion familiar and inoffensive. And so he did; and unchristian too. Those things which our hands can grasp, our understandings cannot comprehend. Why then deny to the Deity Himself the privilege of being one, amidst that multitude of mysteries which He has made?

Here let me observe, what perhaps has escaped your notice, with regard to the blessed Trinity, which gives our unbelievers the greatest offence. The *revalation* of it is not only necessary for our understanding the foundation of christianity, but is also, I conceive, an absolute demonstration of its truth. Because it is a mystery which by *nature* could not possibly have en-

tered into the imagination of man; which they, who most explode it, confess by their obstinate rejection of it. For why do they reject it, but on that very account? Our opponents therefore, in some measure, support us in our attachment to this supreme article of our creed, which they most condemn; and (what is somewhat remarkable in favour of our faith) support us in it by the very cause for which it is condemned by them.

Mysteries, that is, those great and hidden things of our religion, whose truth we are assured of by Divine Authority, but the manner of their being surpasses our understanding: such as the plurality of persons in the Divine Unity: God manifest in the flesh: the operation of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the believers: the spiritual presence of Christ in the eucharist: the uniting our scattered parts from the dust of death. All which the Scriptures have expressly delivered as catholic truths. Several of these, several heretics have rejected; and the *Socinians* have, in a manner, rejected them all. Faith in these is more acceptable to God, than faith in less abstruse articles of our religion; because it pays that honour which is due to His testimony; and the more seemingly incredible the matter is which we believe, the more respect we shew to the relator of it. This (putting in a *caveat* against the ridicule of infidels) may be called *heroic* faith, correspondent to heroic virtue, at which, out of prudence, they must smile.

This heroic faith may be more *acceptable* to God

(some may say); but, sure, not more *useful* to man. It may have a good influence in *another* life; but what account does *this* find in it? Who can shew me the *moral* effects of it;—From faith in these mysteries, man necessarily, and more justly adores the incomprehensible majesty of God; and more justly and perfectly contemplates his own littleness, and disproportion of thought to those truths that are vouchsafed to his faith. Hence he heartily renders God a due honour for his testimony; and a due acknowledgment of his professed care of his church; and a due thankfulness for the mercy of his revelation. He renders a due obedience to his proper government, as a christian, that is, the authority of the church; and a due assistance to the public peace, which is never safely built but on unity of judgment. And as to his *private* virtue, he keeps in due subjection the pride of understanding, that most vicious affection of the mind, which if let loose, would be attended with a multitude of evils; and with one in particular, which occasions this letter. But though we could see none of these temporal advantages, yet would it be most reasonable in us to believe; unless we, who think it right to believe implicitly in those on whom our fortune depends, think it wrong to believe implicitly in Him, on whom depends our salvation.

But there is, I confess, some error, on our own part, with regard to mysteries. We, perhaps, have given some small excuse for our infidels contempt of mysteries, by more pious, than prudent, attempts, that have been sometimes made toward an explanation of them.

A mystery explained is a mystery destroyed: for what is a mystery, but a thing not known? But things not known may reasonably be believed; in the very strangest things there may be truth, and in things very credible, a lye*.

It is with our understandings as with our eyes. Both have their mysteries: both have objects beyond their reach; some accidentally, some absolutely. We see not those objects that are placed in an obscure light, because there is a defect in the medium: we see not those that are vested with too much light, because there is a weakness in the sensory, unable to sustain such strong impressions. Thus it is with the objects of our understandings: some things we know not, for want of being duly informed. Salvation was a mystery to the Gentiles; but ceased so to be, when revealed by the gospel. Other things we know not, because they exceed the measure of our comprehension. Thus, some articles of our faith are such mysteries, as by no revelation can cease to be so. They must be mysteries, while men are men; while yet unblessed with powers that are not indulged to this imperfect state. As it is bold and vain, so, perhaps, it has even been prejudicial to the truth, to labour at rational evictions of sacred mysteries; for, by these means, men attempt to comprehend the Divine Nature, by putting it under some injurious disguise; as we venture to gaze at the sun, after we have watched it into a cloud.

* Quintil. Institut. l. iv. c. 2.

God forbad images of Himself, because it is impossible that any sensible representations could do otherwise than derogate from Him that is invisible: nor can the diminishing imagery of our notions derogate less from Him that is incomprehensible. I presume not to censure those who have made use of illustrations to the proper ends of piety; all I mean, is, that fallible ratiocination should not be made the grounds of faith, whose proper basis is infallible testimony. Nor is it longer faith than while it rests on *that*; for when I believe, not so much what is revealed, as what my own reason pronounces to be true; I believe not God, but myself. I assume, not obey; and give proof rather of the pride, than humiliation, of my reason; whereas its humiliation is a principal end aimed at by God's so strict demand of our faith.

And, indeed, far from humiliation, and even common modesty, must he be, who hopes to give light to those mysteries which St. Paul, with all his learning, eloquence, and inspiration, pronounced to be to the Jews a stumbling-block; and to the Greeks, those most subtle of men, foolishness: that is, they thought it folly to believe them, because unintelligible; and because they did not apprehend, that there was any Divine authority to compel their belief. And such Greeks have *we*; Epicurean Greeks, sensual, subtle, and unbelieving; and whose celebrated writings are of equal authority with

Quicquid Græcia mendax
Audet in historia.———Juv.

Men, who reject divine assistance, as too officious, with a sort of disdain, as if it affronted their own abilities; and whose presumptuous opinions are industriously spread, by pest-men, through the land.

With the gross and horrid effects of such opinions, and their consequences, the distempered age groans, and kingdoms shake, and judgments threaten. And well they may. How many private families have their infamous secrets? how many public transactions their barefaced iniquity? high courts of justice have their *jus datum sceleri*, and blush not to plead precedent for the violation of their own laws; and the corruption of the times, for more corruption still. Is not this heaping mountain upon mountain against heaven? And think we heaven will never return the blow?

We have had already, nay *now* have, some light and merciful admonitions from heaven. But can it be thought, that an age of judgments and pastimes; of riots and distresses; of excessive debts, and excessive expence; of public poverty, and private accumulation; of new sects in religion, and new sallies in sin; and every other contradiction to common sense, does not call for *more*? I, Sir, am fastened in the country; nor know I much of that larger and fouler sink of debauchery in which you breathe. But even here, I know too much. Where is that village that has not its suicides of intemperance; or its bold adventurers for still quicker death from the hand of public justice? And, to confirm that opinion above advanced, of the close tie and mutual growth of vice and unbelief, al-

most every cottage can afford us one that has *corrupted*, and every palace one that has *renounced*, the faith.

I know, Sir, you will tell me, that it is the business of our common piety, to deplore; of our prayers, to obstruct; and of our lives, rather than our harangues, to confute them. True; for if our Christianity is to be found no where but in our books, the Christian and Infidel may drop their dispute. A Tillotson, and a Bolingbroke, are on the same side: their contest is but verbal; their agreement is essential, and their association will prove eternal.

But, Sir, it is our duty to speak and write (if we can), as well as live, against the enemies of our Christian faith. I proceed therefore to observe, that the Viscount's arguments against the authority of the Scriptures have been long since answered. But he is not without precedent in this point. This repetition of already refuted arguments seems to be a deistical privilege, or distemper, from which few of them are free. Even echoes of echoes are to be found amongst them; which evidently shews, that they write not to discover truth, but to spread infection; which old poison re-administered will do, as well as new; and it will be struck deeper into the constitution, by repeating the same dose. Besides, new writers will have new readers. The book may fall into hands untainted before; or, the already-infected may swallow it more greedily in a new vehicle; or, they that were disgusted with it in one vehicle, may relish it in another. I therefore ask pardon: what I mis-called distemper, I find,

on second thoughts, is perfect prudence; but such prudence as, with them, would throw a christian writer into the bottom of contempt.

There are more reasons for our deists to be dissatisfied with themselves than those already given. *Infidel* is an opprobrious name; but time was, when *deism* was the true religion; and they are for still retaining the credit once due to that character. It is therefore fit for a friend to Christianity, nor less fit for a friend to them, to take notice, that it is impossible for a *good* man, that is, one aiming at the divine favour above all things, to reject an offered revelation, without inquiring into its title to the high character it assumes; and, that it is impossible (in my opinion) for a *reasonable* man to reject the Christian *revelation*, if he *does* inquire. He, therefore, who continues a deist, in a land enlightened by the Gospel, must be wanting in goodness, or reason; must be either criminal, or dull. None, therefore, can be more mistaken than they, that profess deism for the credit of superior understanding, or for the sake of exercising a more pure, and perfect, virtue. Yet these are the only pretences which they do, or dare, avow, for their fatal choice. Must not then their *real* motive be of a nature which they think prudent to conceal?

But to conceal it, is not easy: for *reason*, our of itself defective reason, in many points of the last moment to man, wants, wishes, calls for a *revelation*; and cannot but accept, when offer'd, what it calls for:

that is, reasonable deists cannot but become Christians, where the Gospel shines.

Or argue thus (for it admits of various proof): God Almighty would not have made a revelation, but in order to be received. And by whom received? Doubtless by the reasonable, and good. And if by some of them, why not by all? And if all the reasonable, and good, receive it; what must they be that reject it? Therefore revealed religion rejected, proves natural religion disobeyed. I said, above, that deists were blameable, how good soever their lives might be: But *now* it seems to appear, that their lives cannot be good. Others, perhaps, have forborne speaking so plain, out of charity. I venture on it out of what I conceive to be charity, greater still: for nothing that can awaken them can be kindly suppressed.

Cornelius, the centurion, though one of the best of men, thought not the belief of the Gospel unnecessary to his salvation. But modern deists, wiser, not better than he, have their objections to the Gospel. Their chief objection is against its *mysteries*. There is nothing mysterious in it, but with regard to things, which we either *can not*, or *need not*, understand. *Can* not, through the limitation of the human intellect; or *need* not, through the sufficiency of other means, and motives, for our leading good lives. To what amounts, then, this capital objection, and charge against it? To no more than this, *viz.* That Christianity performs not what is impossible to be performed; for it is as impossible for its Author, Almighty God, to do *more*

than is needful for his gracious end, *viz.* the good lives of mankind; as to do what, in its nature, is impossible to be done.

Indeed, all their objections to Christianity seem to be no more, nor less, than playing the best card they have; than using the best expedient they can think of, to keep themselves in countenance, and the world in the dark, as to the true motive of their apostacy. Nor are their objections to be looked on, in those that are men of sense, as an argument of their disbelief, but their dislike. They wish not the mysteries removed; for that would rob them of a favourite objection. They wish not the darkness of the mysteries removed; but transferred; transferred from the *doctrines*, to the *moral precepts*. These are without a cloud; these are too plain for their purpose. None ever fully complied with these, but was easily reconciled to the mysteries of the Gospel. The disgusted, despotic heart commands the passive, obedient head, to fight its unjust quarrel, and say it is its own: So that *Satan* may blame them for some degree of hypocrisy in his favour; may blame them for only pretending to disbelieve. If, on the other hand, Christians were not also hypocrites; hypocrites, I mean, as to practice; they would rob the deists of their most plausible plea against us; and either lessen their numbers, or increase their shame.

I hope that some of the deists; at least, some of those whose principles are endangered by them; may admit some little impression from what has been of-

fered. I hope they may discern, and own the *self-accusation* which is, evidently, implied in our deists renunciation of Christianity; or, if I am mistaken, that they will set me right; for if I have wrong'd them, I have wrong'd them much. For, in what a disadvantageous light appear these deserters from christianity in these pages? A *deistical* tongue, a *christian* conscience, and a partly *pagan* heart! What a sad composition is this? It is a far heavier charge than I wish to find true.

But it is a natural question, "How comes it to pass, "that men of parts should so much disaffect the Scrip-"tures, so admirable, and still more and more admi-"rable, in proportion to the discernment of their rea-"der?"

Can it be from *ignorance?* It may be so, if their hearts are worse than their heads; for there are parts of Scripture which none but a good man can well understand: "Rejoice always; and again I say, Re-"joice." This must appear to the vicious absurd because impracticable, and therefore un-inspired. To rejoice in tribulation, they have neither cause, nor power. Thus, bad manners, almost necessarily, render men infidels to holy writ. On the contrary, a good life is a key to the Scriptures. "The secret of the "Lord is with those that fear him." A text this, as unintelligible to the vicious as the former. As he has had no experience, so neither has he any comprehension of its truth. The good man comprehends, and *feels* it too. Thus the Scripture, like the cloudy pillar

which it records, is light to the true *Israëlite*, but darkness to the *Egyptians*. Hence acutest understandings in religious debates often lose their edge.

Can that cause we seek, be *vanity?* It may be said of the Viscount's writings as of *Catiline, Satis eloquentiæ, sapientiæ parum.* Had his eloquence been less; had those talents been denied him, which flattered him with hope of shining a first lustre in the lettered world, he had escaped a temptation which has evidently been too hard for his prudence; and a common-siz'd head had, probably, left his heart in safety. So formidable a possession is an immortal pen (if his *is* immortal); a pen more fatal to its master, than *Cato*'s sword.

Or might not *envy* be the cause we seek? "But "can these men envy Christians, whom they quit on "account of our unhappy mistake?" Man is not only desirous, but ambitious too, of happiness. He but ill bears that another should be happier than himself; because superior happiness is a natural argument of superior wisdom or worth. The man of a libertine life knows that the good Christian, if his religion is true, is, on the whole, much happier than himself. Therefore he wishes it to be false; and endeavours to find it so. And strong endeavours to be in the wrong, Heaven will punish with success. It will permit them to believe their own lye: that is, to fall on their own sword, which was drawn against the truth.

Non his quæsitum munus in usus. ——VIRG.

And I am the more inclined to impute their opposition to *envy*, rather than *vanity*; because pure vanity is

consistent with good-nature; and may be a very candid thing: But envy has bitterness, and ill-will; and ridicule is the genuine child of ill-nature; ridicule, that offensive brat of which they are so fond.

Now though nothing is more improper in important debates than raillery; yet can I make some apology for them. They may, possibly, perceive, that the load on their own misgiving consciences, would sink them, were it not for the light expedient of forced mirth, like a bladder filled with wind, to keep them above water: and that they, sometimes have their doubts, and misgivings of heart, it is reasonable to believe. To give full established security is the incommunicable privilege of the Gospel.

For the reasons above, I venture to set down *envy* among the causes of infidelity, though (I think) by others overlooked. And further, I believe it to be a *very principal* cause of *lettered* infidelity in the world. Other, but not greater vices are, doubtless, the chief cause of infidelity in lower, and illiterate, life; where sense has no rival in thought, but tyrannizes alone.

But whatever is the cause of their infidelity, be it *ignorance*, *vanity*, *envy*, or any other vice, their infidelity will naturally have some effect in *our* favour. It is much to be hoped, that it will put us on our guard, and make us better men. Our leading a bad life, is playing into their hands. It is giving them an argument in the debate, against ourselves. Though the argument is bad, yet it is an argument still. And since they have none *but* bad arguments, and such they *will*

make use of, we should not increase the number. This is like furnishing them with ammunition to protract the war; and though the war protracted will not hurt us, yet will it hurt them; and, as we are Christians, *that* should give us an equal concern.

Secondly, Christianity may thank its *opponents* for much new light, from time to time, thrown in on the sublime excellence of its nature; and the manifestation of its truth; opponents, in *some* sort, more welcome than its *friends;* as they do it signal service without running it in debt; and have no demand on our gratitude for the favours they confer. The stronger its adversaries, the greater its triumph: the more it is disputed, the more indisputably will it shine. With what pious pleasure must you see the brightest talents striking at it, with the most hearty good-will, yet dropping harmless, like old Priam's spear?

Telum imbelle sine ictu
Conjecit; rauco quod protinus ære repulsum.
Et summo clypei nequicquam umbone pependit. VIRG.

Christianity, that great support of man's welfare, and God's glory, like a well-built arch, the greater load of opposition, and reproach, its enemy lays on it, the stronger it stands.

Thirdly, Their antichristian writings may *detect* them: for since (as shewn above) a false faith, or no faith at all, is the natural consequence of a bad life, it is possible that the gentlemen in the opposition, while they are giving us their opinions, may be giving us

more: They may be discovering their *morals*, while they mean only to teach us their *creed:* And, thus, they may carry, like *Bellerophon*, their own condemnation, while they imagine they are, graciously, conveying intelligence, and new light, to mankind: So that the old proverb, *Bellerophontis literæ*, may be a proper motto for the learned labours of them all.

But condemnation from others will be much more supportable than their own; if that should fall on them. And where is he on whom it shall not one day fall? If a man born blind, who had never so much as heard of the sun, moon, and stars, should suddenly receive sight; he would not be more astonished at the first rushing in of those *material* glories, than would the man, by vice struck blind to religion, be, at his first conviction of heavenly truths, *viz.* divine manifestations, awful revelations, fulfilled prophecies, numberless miracles; and one unbroken chain of marvellous expedients, from before creation to this hour, for our salvation; those spiritual luminaries; those (dare I say) sun, moon, and stars, of the *moral* world; if God should give him light. Till then, walking in darkness, he must mistake danger for safety, shame for glory, and mischief for pleasure. Like the blinded of *Sodom*, he reaches eagerly after, and presses hard for, enjoyment; but of real enjoyment, of true felicity, he cannot find the door; as I propose shewing in my *next*.

If some part of it may seem too severe, I must observe, that no man can strike fire with a feather. A fire elemental is diffused through all nature, though

lock'd up in dark matter, and unapparent in most parts of our globe. Thus, I conceive, that there is divine grace spread through all hearts (where not intirely quenched by vice), though inactive, and dormant in them. No slight animadversion can awake it. It must be a blow of some force, that strikes it out of a heart of flint. And such there *must* be in these days of darkness, when few sparks of grace are apparent. Such there *must* be when infidelity prevails; for infidelity, and faith, are the day and night of the moral world. One reveals, the other hides heaven from our thoughts. Happy am I if this Letter shall occasion the smallest dawn on but one single heart, in this our grand eclipse. With you, dear Sir, the dawn is long since past; and that you may continue in the light, till heaven, at that knock of *faith* which only will be heard, shall admit you into perfect day, where *undisputed* truth, and *unmistaken* pleasure, with endless glory, crown the just; this is the prayer of

Your Affectionate

Humble Servant.

ON PLEASURE.

LETTER II.

DEAR SIR,

I NOW proceed to say something of *Pleasure*; that subject which you so warmly recommend; not aware I believe, that it may be long before men, whose faults set the public eye at defiance, will learn to blush when alone in their closets. And till then, what hope of much reformation from the pen? Besides, though our transgressions with regard to pleasure are great; yet they are not new. To the scandal of the antediluvians be it spoken, there were British iniquities before the flood. To such a degree have all moral subjects been exhausted, that it is difficult for a writer on them not to *repeat*, though he is no plagiary. But your desires are an apology for my deficiencies in compliance with them.

Whether we are more hardened in infidelity, or softened in pleasure, may be disputed: but none can deny that the love of pleasure is the root of every crime.

Theft, murder, perjury, are a few of its fatal fruits; nor the worst. But I shall not dip so deep in its consequences; yet deep enough to render the name of a *man of pleasure*, which some affect for their honour, not only ridiculous, but detestable.

What an extravagant dominion does *pleasure* exercise over us? It is not only the pestilence that walketh in darkness; but an arrow that destroyeth at noon-day. The moon hides her face at our midnight enormities; and the morning blushes on our unfinished debauch. I am almost tempted to say, that our impudent folly puts nature out of countenance. But there is no need by words to exaggerate the fatal truth. Our luxury is beyond example, and beyond bounds; it stops not at the poor: even they that live on alms are infected with it.

It has often been observed, that it is with states, as with men. They have their birth, growth, health, distemper, decay, and death. Men sometimes drop suddenly by an apoplexy; states by conquest; in full vigour, both As man owes his mortality to original sin; some states owe their fall to some defect, or infelicity, in their original constitution. But contracted distemper is the most common ruin of states, and men. And what national distemper more mortal than our own? On the soft beds of luxury most kingdoms have expired.

If causes should not fail of their usual effect; if our national distemper, far from being cutaneous at present, should reach the vitals of our state; how appli-

cable to this opulent, proud, profligate metropolis (which calls the sea her own, and whose vices, more diffusive, are without a shore) would be the prophet's sacred dirge over antient Tyre; whose sea-born wealth, and hell-born iniquity, let it not be said, was but a prelude to our own? And yet if we proceed in our infernal career, that most infamous reproach may become but too true.

The sublime, and most memorable words runs thus; and I cannot but think that at present, they must have a formidable sound in a British ear. "Is this the joy-"ous city? whose antiquity is of days remote? whose "merchants were princes, and her traffickers the ho-"nourable of the earth? whose revenue was the har-"vest of rivers? and her exchange the mart of nati-"ons? who sat as a queen; stretched out her hand "over the seas; and shook the kingdoms? But she "is fallen! she is fallen! Heaven has stained the pride "of all glory." How sorely must you be pained at the report?

Has not Britain reason to be more deeply struck with this part of Scripture than the rest of mankind; The prophecy as yet, indeed, through mercy, is unfulfilled in us: but if Britain continues, like Tyre,—"To sing "as an harlot; to take the harp; to make sweet me-"lody; sing many songs; turn to her hire; and com-"mit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world," —her fall is to be feared, unless the fate of most former empires betray us into mistake; and that national poison which has ever proved mortal, is mortal no

more. If the fate of kingdoms is lodged in a just, and impartial hand, what but the grossest self-flattery can banish our fears? And if our fears are banished, leave it not unobserved, that our very want of fear is a proof of our danger: for Heaven infatuates, when it determines to destroy.

"But such a general face of affluence, and gaiety. "Are these signs of ruin?" Not signs only, but causes of it too. Not Babylon alone has been smitten at a banquet, and perished in its joys. Most nations have been gayest, when nearest to their end; and, like a taper in the socket, have blazed as they expired.

Were our fathers to rise from their graves, they would conceive that their fortune had thrown them on some day of public festivity, nor imagine that every day was drunk of the same disease. By our gaiety we seem to celebrate the perpetual triumph of the millenium; by our vices, to add to it the manners of the antediluvian world; and, by our security under them, to put full confidence in the divine promise that the world shall be drowned no more. If with the vices of the antediluvians, we had their years too, more might be said in our excuse: but to weigh such a moment against eternity, shews that the balance is in very weak hands. The world, which the divine vengeance swept away for its enormities, was incapable of so great a guilt.

But in so general a dissolution of manners, are there none that stand intitled to more particular blame? Are not our great patrons of luxury a sort of anti-Curtii,

who leap into the gulph for the ruin of their country? Their country's ruin they threaten by the malignity of their example; while by the profusion of their expence they nearly finish their own. What a weakness is self-denial? what idle self-tormentors are penitents? what wretched lunatics, or gross suicides, are the noble army of martyrs, if *these* men are in the right? How *cheap* would their pleasures come, if they cost them nothing more than their health, credit, and estates?

Pleasure is in some sort more pernicious than direct vice. Vice has, naturally, some horror in it. It startles, and alarms the conscience, and puts us on our guard. Pleasure, under the colour of being harmless, has an opiate in it; it stupifies and besots. In the soft lap of pleasure conscience falls asleep. Vice, losing its horror, becomes familiar. And as vice increases, some expedient becomes necessary to reconcile us to ourselves. Thus, looking out for some shadow of excuse, we naturally slide into groundless doubts, and become infidels out of pure self-defence.

And, as pleasure makes us infidels, by stupefying the conscience: so it makes us very bad husbands of temporal enjoyments, by darkening our understandings; and this unqualifies us for the very point to which *alone* we pretend.

It is this cloud on their understanding which hinders our voluptuaries from discerning, that their blind rage for pleasure turns blessings into their reverse. Birth, education, and abundance, are great blessings; but, abused by pleasure into motives and instruments of in-

dulgence, birth is more ignoble than obscurity; knowlege is more pernicious than ignorance; and abundance more a misfortune than want. Men of rank (and of such I speak) if wrong, can scarce avoid sinning beyond themselves. How pestilential their example falls on the lower world, which, under the welcome force of such illustrious authority, turn dissolute, as much for the sake of their credit and fortune, as of their lusts; pride, and interest, bringing needless succour to loose desire; and Tyburn has sometimes reaped, what assemblies have sown. Great men in the wrong, are powerful engines of mischief, and, like bursting bombs, destroy themselves, and all around them.

And as to the two supreme blessings, and glories of man, their reason and immortality; these, as they manage it, flame out into vengeance too great to be mentioned without horror. Their reason serves only to render them more guilty; and their immortality to render endless the sad wages of their guilt.

It is this cloud on our understanding which makes us so little masters in the very science we profess. Happiness is our study, but are we not dunces in it? We know not, or seem not to know, that all *real* enjoyment lies within the compass of God's commands; which abridge not, but defend them: that when we dip too deep in pleasure, we stir a sediment, that renders it impure, and noxious: that (as much a paradox as it may seem) the best means of arriving at the true pleasures of the body, is to preserve, and cultivate, the powers of the soul; and that a good understanding

is, in man, the source, and security, of mere *animal* delight.

Let these gentlemen take notice that I am not against enjoyment; I am as great a lover of it, as they; for without a relish of the good things of life, we cannot be thankful. Enjoy, but enjoy reasonably, and thankfully to the great Donor; *that* will secure us from excess. To *enjoy*, is our wisdom, and our *duty*; it is the great lesson of human life; but a lesson which few have learned; and none less than *these*, who proclaim themselves *masters of art* in it.

It is this pleasure-bred cloud on the understanding, which makes us forget, that virtue is the health of the soul: that all provision, and parade from without, can make a sensualist just as happy, as the same can make an invalid: that both have pains adhering, necessarily, to their present state: that both have rather remedies, than joys: that assemblies, balls, masquerades, *&c.* are but as well-stored hospitals, unnecessary to the sound; and but poor palliatives to the sick: though pretenders to more than health, they confess our distemper; and, what is worse, increase the distemper they confess: and that of distempers the worst, a wrong judgment in our most important point.

I grant, that in the boundless field of licentiousness, some bastard joys may rise, that look gay, more especially at a distance; but they soon wither. No joys are always sweet, and flourish long, but such as have self-approbation for their root, and the divine favour for their shelter. We are for rootless joys, joys beyond

appetite; which is the sole root of sensual delight. We are for joys, not of man's native growth, but forced up by luxurious art: dung'd by great expence; and shone on, not by the divine favour, but a strong imagination, which gives them all their little taste; and makes them apt, like other crude fruits, to surfeit, and destroy. We are, in a word, for joys of our own creation, the seeds of which Heaven never sowed in our hearts. But we may as well invade another prerogative of Heaven, and, with the tyrant of *Elis*, pretend to make thunder and lightning, as *real* joy. I say *real* joy; joy we may make, but not chearfulness. Joy may subsist without thought; chearfulness rises from it. Joy is from the pulse; chearfulness from the heart. That may give a momentary flash of pleasure; this alone makes a happy man. And happy men there may be, who never laughed in their lives: and in a situation, where reason calls for the reverse, there is not in nature so melancholy a thing as joy.

It is this intellectual cloud, which hangs, like a fog, over every gay resort of our *moral* invalids (though invisible to common eyes), which flings us not only into mistakes, but contradictions. How sick are we of yesterday? yet how fond of to-morrow, though devoted to the same cheat as the past? Which stings us into contradictions not only in reason; but contradictions to sense. We can't believe that fatigue, is fatigue: let its cause be what it will. Too much recreation tires as much, as too much business: yet one we swallow; are choaked by the other. The man of

business has, at least, his seventh day's rest. Our fever for folly never intermits. Our week has no sabbath in it. So much harder is the master whom we serve, than that of better men; and yet, to our infamous honour be it spoken, we are better servants than they. How do we run, labour, expend; expose ourselves, hurt our families, resist unbounded, eternal temptations to wisdom; offer up the rich sacrifice of conscience, and understanding; watch; watch late; and all, but pray, for his service? Quite jaded with protracted amusements, we yawn over them. The dull drone of nominal diversion still humming on, when the short tune of enjoyment is over, lulls us quite asleep. Like the bear in the fable, we hug our darling to death. Instead of rejoicing in tribulation (of which few among us ever heard), we sorrow in delight: for, to speak the truth (though we would not have it divulged), we tread this eternal round of vanities, less, for the pleasure it brings, than for the pain it suspends. It is a refuge, not a prize. Like criminals (as we are), we fly to it from our much-injured, unfortunate foes, from ourselves; which chide and sting us, when alone; when together, we support each other's spirits; which is like sailors clinging to each other for safety, when the vessel is sinking. We fly from ourselves, because we first fly from our Maker. Wretched flight? Hell is nothing but an intire absence from him; and every partial departure has its proportion of it.

But those deep draughts of pleasure which besot us, must answer for all absurdities; and, among the rest, for our intire ignorance of the nature of that world in which we live. Mirth at a funeral is scarce more indecent and unnatural, than a perpetual flight of gaiety, and burst of exultation, in a world like this: a world which may seem a paradise to fools, but is an hospital with the wise: a world, in which bare escape is a prime felicity. *Effugere est triumphus.*

The numberless pains of body, and mind; the dark solemn approaches to, or dismal vestibules of, the grave, as well as opening graves themselves, are so thick scattered over the face of the whole earth, that an unpetrified heart can't look round, without feeling an inevitable damp, and general disconsolation; and venting a sigh universal for the whole family of *Adam*, for the lot of all mankind. Nothing but strong faith in eternal life could hinder tears from bursting o'er it: nor are tears too much; for sympathy is the chief duty of human life.

Were one-tenth part of the wretchedness *seen*, that is *felt*, it would strike us with horror. Heaven means to make one-half of the species a moral lecture to the other. It surrounds us with deplorable objects, not more for the sake of the wretched, than for our own; that our compassion awaken'd, may awaken our prudence; and teach us what we have *to do*, by shewing us what we have *to fear*. Shall the rich, and the well educated, throw their abundance down the sink of unprofitable and untasted delights, while untaught mul-

titudes mistake, and sin; and indigent multitudes shiver, and starve? While we think we are sparing expences, we are running in debt. How deep are we in arrears to the distressed? The distressed have, from reason, as just a demand on our superfluities, as we have, from law, on our stewards for our estates. But this is no *play-debt*, and therefore, without dishonour, undischarged.

Is then my repeated censure of intellectual darkness too severe? I wish it were. But, alas! how distant from their thoughts are the points the most important? How foreign to their interest, and all that is nearest their hearts? When I speak of their darkness, I do not forget my own. There is not that man on earth that does not well deserve censure, and even from them. But there is difference in deviation from the right. *Mulattos* are not *Ethiopians*. I grant in their excuse, that, though all can see folly in pleasures past, yet must he be wiser than *Solomon*, who sees it in those to come. Yet wiser than *Solomon*, in this respect, *must* we be, or continue mere idiots; and idiots with regard to the *present* life: for this life's enjoyment lies, chiefly, in our title to the joys of the next; as earth becomes fruitful from the kind influence of the distant sun.

And now what occasion of advancing any thing more to the condemnation of these sons of *Epicurus*, and in disfavour of pleasure, than this, *viz.* That by darkening our understandings, it robs us of *this* world; and by stupefying our consciences, of the *next*. So far

are they from their boasted happiness, that even in the judgment of a Heathen (not to mention the Scripture, of much less authority with them), they are dead while yet alive. *Is demum* VIVERE, *atque animâ frui videtur; qui alicui intentus negotio, aut artis bonæ, aut præclari facinoris, famam quærit.* Sallust.

It is said of their master Epicurus, *Deos verbis reliquit, re sustulit.* By his, and their, goddess, *Pleasure*, they do just the same. They loudly boast, and effectually destroy, it; the first, through want of modesty; the last through want of understanding. But they must keep themselves in countenance, though out of heart; and make themselves some *small* amends from vanity, for what is wanting to reason, and to sense.

Nor tread they their Master's steps in this alone. He out of a swarm of dancing atoms, was for making a world: They, out of a giddy whirl of innumerable amusements, those minute particles of pleasure, are for forming happiness: A system equally philosophical; and of equal success. A GOD alone can make one; the god-like only can atchieve the other: And where are they to be found in this hopeful school?

The *one thing necessary* for happiness is in common to both worlds; this, and the next. In vain we seek a different receipt for it, one in time, another in eternity. *Virtue* wanting, every thing else becomes necessary to happiness, and ineffectual. To what amounts, then, the boast of their numberless felicities? It brings, in proof of their happiness, a demonstration

of their misery. *A good man shall be satisfied from himself* alone. A bad man shall be dissatisfied, with all the world at his devotion.

But there is a third particular, in which, if they had followed their Master, it would have been more for their advantage, and credit: An indulgent Providence has abundantly provided us with irreproveable pleasures; why are these swept away with an ungrateful hand, to make room for poisons, of our own deadly composition, to be placed in their stead? *Epicurus* was in love with his gardens. But that is an amour too innocent for *them*: A garden has ever had the praise, and affection, of the wise. What is requisite to make a wise, and happy man, but reflection and peace? and both are the natural growth of a garden. Nor is a garden only a promoter of a good man's happiness, but a picture of it: and, in some sort, shews him to himself. Its culture, order, fruitfulness, and seclusion from the world, compared to the weeds, wildness, and exposure of a common field, is no bad emblem of a good man, compared to the multitude. A garden weeds the mind; it weeds it of worldly thoughts; and sows celestial seed in their stead. For what see we there, but what awakens in us our gratitude to heaven? A garden to the virtuous is a paradise still extant; a paradise unlost. What a rich present from heaven of sweet incense to man was wafted in that breeze? What a delightful entertainment of sight glows on yonder bed, as if in kindly showers the watry bow had shed all its most celestial colours on it? Here are no objects

that fire the passions: None that do not instruct the understanding, and better the heart, while they delight the sense; but not the sense of *these* men. To them the tulip has no colours; the rose no scent: Their palate for Pleasure is so deadened, and burnt out, by the violent stroke of higher tastes, as leaves no sensibility for the softer impressions of these; much less for the relish of those philosophic, or moral, sentiments, which the verdant walk, clear stream, embowering shade, pendant fruit, or rising flower, those speechless, not powerless, orators, ever praising their great Author, inspire: Much less still for their religious inspirations. Who cannot look on a flower till he frightens himself out of infidelity? Religion is the natural growth of the works of God; and infidelity, of the inventions of men.

Spiritually blind, deaf, and stupid, they see not the great *Omnipresent* walking in the garden; they hear not his call; they know not that they are naked; they hide not among the trees; but stand in open defiance of his laws. *Religion* is far from them.

And where can we hope religion, if not in *age*? And are there *Hecubas* to be found among the bright *Helens* of our times? Is diversion grown a leveller, like death? Can assemblies banish distinction, and shew us all dates, like church-yards? The latter, for *their* years, is the more proper scene. Give me leave, Sir, to address them; and address them in haste: They may die by to-morrow. To-night they are

shining at the assembly. Thither, for a moment, imagination transports me to attend them.

" So various, Ladies! and cogent, are the reasons " which might call you to this place, that I am at a " loss which to thank for the honour it receives. Come " you to admire, or to be admired? Your modesty de- " clines the last. Come you out of kindness, then, " to authorise those amusements, you chuse not to " adorn? Or come you, out of compassion, to make " these young criminals appear more innocent, than " they could appear uncompared with superior indis- " cretion? Or come you out of piety, to return thanks " at this *religious house*, for your so narrowly escaping " the grave? Or come you out of pure generosity, to " heighten the mirth of the night? Your point is car- " ried. What borrowed ornaments are these? Is vani- " ty still in its spring? Is the folly of hairless heads " putting forth its gay blossoms in the December of " life? Age cannot drop its dignity, and yet retain its " privileges. It must be laughed at, if it will not be " revered; and objects of reverence cannot enter at " *these* doors. We reverence age, as we reverence " noble birth; on supposition, both: If our supposi- " tion proves false, our homage dies.

" A little entertainment, you say, is natural—What " a portentous jumble of seasons, what a violation of " nature is this; winter dancing with the spring? " Where are the first partakers of your pastimes, when " pastimes became you? Their very monuments are " in ruins. What real connexion of heart, or inter-

" ests, can you have with any now alive? And with-
" out such connection, how insipid your commerce
" with them? Sure you cannot approve *Mezentius's*
" connection of the living with the dead.

" Hang your hours, though, probably, so few, so
" *very* heavy on your hands, that you had rather bear
" contempt, than them? Is it drowned by the spright-
" ly viol, or hear you yon solemn bell? Wants that the
" power to call you to your closets, which calls your
" grand-children to their graves? Is it thus you dis-
" charge the duties of age to the rising generation?
" Whatever seeds of prudence you would sow in their
" hearts, before they can take root, these vanities blow
" away; especially, if you, like the ladies of Lapland,
" heighten the * *hurricane* yourselves.

" Have you never heard, my good Ladies, of the
" redemption of time? You carry yours to market, and
" sell it for nothing, nay, you dearly buy it off your
" hands. Can nothing but such trifles, such murder
" of time, make you think that you are alive? Can
" nothing but the stroke of death convince you, you
" shall die? To their beauty alone, too much amuse-
" ment is forgiven, even in the young. What, then,
" have *you* to plead?—That which is fairer than beauty,
" if you will call it to your aid: Virtue can reconcile
" our respect to wrinkles. It can render age amiable,
" when bloom smiles in vain. But vice, and defor-
" mity, when twisted together, is such a *Gorgon*, as
" turns the tenderest heart into stone.

* Some assemblies so called.

" Pardon, Ladies! that I presume to call that vice, " which you will soften by some milder name. What is " innocence in youth, may be vice in years. Besides, " mark the mischief of what you call harmless expedi- " ents to smooth the rugged path of life. You spread " that path with snares, to the ruin of those you love. " You make *parental authority*, that natural safeguard " of youth, their temptation to folly; and *filial obedi-* " *ence*, so lovely, so pious, the strange cause of their " crimes. Through such mazes of more than folly, " when parents lead the way; children, out of pure " duty, may tread their wrong steps. Or, if they have " more discernment, or more grace; what follows!— " What you yourselves will be shocked to hear; and " I to tell: A daughter *blushing* for her who bore her. " Which to my knowledge, and astonishment, has been " the too memorable, and too deplorable, case."

Here I would fain leave off, and throw a mantle over the nakedness of our own sex: But that would be too great partiality. It is too sure *Adam* also fell. As I have spoken to his daughters, I must speak, Sir, by your permission, now to his *aged* sons. I can speak with more freedom to these! I was forced to spare his daughters out of decency.

" Ye first on roll for Eternity! why this waste of " time? Why is its date quite erased? Your spruce " appearance is a perfect forgery. And deserves it not " the wonted penalty for it? You, for whom it is " almost as unnatural, as for a mole, to be seen above- " ground, what mean you by trespassing on this ne-

" ther world? Or if here, ye deserters from death! to
" whose corps you belong, why list into so very fo-
" reign a service? Death, the more he is forgot, the
" more formidable he grows. But how could you
" forget him, who have seen him snatching from your
" bosom such numbers of your friends? Has he so
" often knocked at the next door, and so frequently
" shook his lance in vain? Will you drop into the
" grave on your road to the ball? You, who, *one* full
" age of man expired, commence, a *new*, with all the
" wantonness of youth, by an antichristian regenera-
" tion; a *second* birth into all the foibles of a sensual
" life! Consider, what tender reverence, what respect
" mixt with compassion, is paid to years owning their
" infirmities, and supporting them, as they ought.
" But infirmities of body dissembled, that those of the
" mind may be the more indulged; a vicious mind
" stinging on a jaded body into shame; this calls not
" only for the scorn, but detestation of mankind.

" Consider, Sirs! is there not some mistake? Do
" not your minds, through disorder of the machine, go
" too slow, and misrepresent the time of day? Else,
" how could men, who have not space sufficient left
" between them, and their graves, for life's wonted
" delusions to display their gay phantoms; who can
" hardly hope to repeat to-morrow the farce of to-day;
" still persist to be boys? Young men, indeed, may
" see visions of what never shall come to pass; and be
" ravished with them: But old men in their senses,
" cannot so much as dream dreams of delight; such

" delight, I mean, as yours. What delight can these " gay scenes afford you? I should think you should " be more mortified, than amused, where you scarce " can see a face that does not make you look twenty " years older than before. Hope you any regard, or " affection among them? No; despair even of tolera- " tion, but when these *moderns*, for amusement, dip " into you, as into chronological tables, to know what " happened before the flood: Find friends in coevals, " or despair.

" Indeed, my good friends, in *one* sense, most cer- " tainly, you are strangers upon earth, why will you " not be so in the *best?* That you *might* be so in the " best, is probably, the sole reason you are still alive. " Men in years, and the clergy, are the two natural " supports of virtue and religion; that is, the two co- " lumns on which public welfare is built: And the " first is the stronger, as there is less prejudice against it. " They both have higher obligations to the wise than " other men: And if the world sees those higher obli- " gations fail of their due effect, their consciences will " sit easier under the neglect of their own. The " clergy are volunteers; the aged are pressed by na- " ture into the service of wisdom: And if they both " desert, vice may triumph without a battle; and vir- " tue fall without a mourner.

" Ye fine men of rank, and parts! a common sol- " dier (your contempt, no doubt) shall reproach you. " One of them, requesting dismission from CHARLES " Vth, gave this reason for it, *Inter vitæ negotia ex-*

" *tremumque diem oportet aliquod temporis intercedere.*
" Much more *inter vitæ voluptates*, and our last hour.
" Will you go to your graves with your eyes shut, as
" Plutarch tells you the Spartans went to their beds in
" the dark? If so, as reasonable men in years enter
" their graves as a harbour, you will strike on yours,
" as on a rock. You do not only expose yourselves,
" but your whole species. When they that have most
" reason to be wise, are the farthest from it; it sinks
" the dignity of our common nature, brings, beyond
" all other enormities, a reproach on mankind; and
" gives each individual, as a sufferer, as a sharer in
" the scandal, a just right, not only of censure, but re-
" venge.

" This will excuse my indignation at two *notorious*
" offenders: and therefore I shall dare name them.
" Who are they, but *Sedbury* and *Torrismond?* Their
" pictures have been partly drawn by the famous
" *Seymour:* I shall sketch the rest. These are two
" perfect heroes in this transgression; old offenders
" in an offence, which, till old, they could not begin:
" Who join the gallantries of *Paris* to the years of
" *Nestor:* Who read a play-bill, and a bill of morta-
" lity, with the same sensation and aspect: Who can
" *amuse* themselves with a cathedral service: and go
" for an hour's *diversion* to the funeral of a friend?

" How many friends have they lost? that is, how
" often has their confidence in the world been shaken
" at the root? And give they still full proof of their
" obstinate adherence to, and cordial incorporation

" with it? Has it not daily crumbled away in their " fingers? and will they hug it still? How can their " hearts still swell with those flattened bubbles of idle " joy, so often pricked by death?

" Ye two antediluvian youths! what greater folly " on earth than that of confounding seasons, and not " give their respective appropriations to the different " periods of life? Nothing can be in credit that is out " of character; and credit you affect, no one more. " If you would find it, let these gentle hints, like the " light touch of a magic wand, make you shrink from " your vernal bloom; and wither at least to the de- " cencies of fourscore; for I would make you *some* " allowance still.

" Know ye not, that they who in their wrinkled " decline out-dive in folly the temerities of youth, and " die immaturely at twice the age of man, are void of " shame from censure human, and divine; quite cal- " lous to God, and men? Know you not, that such " faults after seventy are as severely judged by this " world, as the next? To be born like a wild ass's " colt, is natural, but not to live so, and retain the " colt's tooth, when all the man's are fallen out. " Time was, when to centaurize was less ridiculous. " But unless your equestrian part is now dismissed, " laughter is irresistible; as your friend *Horace* as- " sures you:

Solve senescentem mature sanus equum, *ne*
Peccet ad extremum ridendus.

" Instead of surfeiting every public place with your " ungodly omnipresence, you should be reserved as " the great Mogul. A little self-annihilation would " be the wisest way even for your own vanity; for " the more we forget our age, the more we remind " others of it; and the younger we would appear, so " much older shall we look, in all eyes but our own.

" Yes, gentlemen! to preserve your dignity, retire " like eastern kings. Kings, indeed, you may be, and " glorious ones too, if you will be wise: For wisdom " is the *crown* of old age; and the fear of the Lord is " its *glory*."

Since the witchcraft of *Pleasure* is so strong as to turn young men into old, by their infirmities; and old into young by their affectation and conceit; let us look a little more narrowly into the perverse composition of that marvellous being, which we style a *Man of Pleasure*; and make somewhat, if possible, like an analysis of it.

The man of Pleasure (though I fear he never asked himself the question) of what nature, species, or rank in the creation conceives he himself to be? Does this yet unconstrued, undecyphered creature consider himself as an *immortal* being? or only as a *rational?* or as a mere *animal?* If as an immortal, let him regard things eternal: If as a rational, let reason reign: If as a mere animal, let him indulge appetite; but not go beyond it. When appetite is satisfied, an animal's meal is over: If as a composition of all three: let it

not be a confusion of them; let it be a *composition;* and order alone can preserve that name.

No; he is for neither of these. He is an immortal, without a sense of immortality. He is a rational, dethroning reason; and an animal, transgressing appetite: An unhappy combination, a wretched chaos of all, without the benefit of either: Nay, a sufferer from each, because an abuser of all. They are not, as heaven designed them, three parties in alliance for his happiness: but three conspirators, of his own making, against his peace.

For mark this immortal maze of human ruin; appetite, reason, and immortality, violate, and are violated by, each other. Subtle reason finds arts, and arguments to tempt appetite beyond her bounds. Unbounded appetite with stupefying sensuality bribes reason to drop her dominion. Her dominion dropped, renders blind immortality regardless of things eternal: And they being disregarded, all immortality's boundless powers, and desires, devolve on things temporal; and devolved on them, with violence impel deposed reason, and riotous appetite, to monstrous lengths of extravagance, which had otherwise lain quite beyond both their power and desire.

Thus stands the perplexed, and hitherto not unravell'd case. The man, in his constitution, debauches the brute: The brute debauched, dethrones the man: the dethroned man, and debauched brute, join in rebellion against the immortal: The subdued mortal re-

signs to them its infinite power and desires: which they exert to the destruction absolute of all three.

The man, if not in alliance with an immortal, never would have had an unbounded power and desire. If not in alliance with a brute, he never would have debased them to mean, and sordid ends; never would have confined them to things below: But being joined to both, and, through perverseness, and stupidity, rendering celestial immortality inglorious, and terrestrial brutality more brutal, he creates a far more miserable being than either of them apart could possibly have been. We may therefore congratulate the *mere* brute on his high prerogative of being incapable of becoming such a monster of rationality as this. And *The Man of Pleasure*, if modest, will, for the future, give the wall to his horse. He, like *Codrus*, disguises himself, puts off his dignity to rush into danger; and happy for him, if he meets with nothing worse than death.

Reason, and immortality, the *man*, and the *immortal*, these only occasion the calamity; and the poor *animal*, an innocent ally, must suffer with them.

If your sister's favourites will contemplate themselves in any glass but their own, let them look in this *true* mirror; and though the features are somewhat monstrous, let them not disown them; since they may change them when they please; and they are pictured so minutely, that they may be the more inclined so to do. For what a hideous ruin of humanity is this? The world after the deluge, a less melancholy sight. Such shocking footsteps sin leaves behind it, in nature

animate, and inanimate. Reason, and virtue, are the sole beauty, and sole salvation of all. Through all her realms creation groans without it. The Deity is all reason in his nature, conduct, and commands. The great, invariable, eternal, alternative, throughout his creation, is, or reason, or ruin. To how many ears in this happy metropolis is this dismal news?

I was going to say, that reason is the sole basis of happiness; but it is not. There are three kinds of happiness on earth, gradually less, and less. There is a happiness from the exertion of reason, where reason is given: This is the happiness of a *man*. There is an inferior happiness from the gratification of sense, where reason is denied: This is the happiness of a *brute*. And there is a calamitous happiness where reason is suppressed, or abused: And this is the happiness of a *wretch*. You see then in what line of happiness our *fine men* must be content to rank.

I know your sister will call my analysis above, a labyrinth of sophistry. I will therefore give *The Man of Pleasure*'s character in a manner less perplexed, and which she may probably censure as too plain; and may wish a clue were wanting to find the meaning.

He is one, who, desirous of being more happy than any man *can* be, is less happy than most men *are*.

One, who seeks happiness every where, but where it is to be found.

One, who out-toils, the labourer, not only without his wages, but paying dearly for it.

He is an immortal being, that has but two marks of a man about him, upright stature, and the power of playing the fool, which a monkey has not.

He is an immortal being, that triumphs in this single, deplorable, and yet *false* hope, that he shall be as happy as a monkey when they are both dead; though he despairs of being so, while yet alive.

He is an immortal being, that would lose none of its *most* darling delights, if he were a brute in the mire; but would lose them all entirely, if he were an angel in heaven.

It is certain, therefore, that he desires not to be there: And if he not so much as *desires* it now, how can he ever *hope* it, when his day of dissipation is over? And if no hope—what is our Man of Pleasure? A man of distraction, and despair, to-morrow.

And who would buy to-day so dear, if it were so to be bought? as certainly it is not. Doubtless the *true* Man of Pleasure is he, who preserves order in his compounded nature; and gives the animal, rational, and immortal, their respective dues. Who, as *immortal*, places in the supreme Being his supreme delight; and, as *rational*, shunning superstitious austerities; and, as *animal*, too great indulgencies; admits of all secular enjoyments that are strictly consistent with his *supreme*. The *true*, and *false*, Man of Pleasure, are brothers; born of the same parent, *viz.* an inextinguishable love of delight: But so superior is one to the other, that like the fabled brothers *Castor* and *Pollux*, one may be said to be in heaven, the other on earth.

To be more explicit, I would gather three particular branches from this general root of happiness, and present them to your sister, as a specimen of the rest.

There is no Man of Pleasure without his Eve; no Eve without her serpent; no serpent without its sting. He that knows not the pure delight, and ever-growing tenderness of a chaste love, knows not the most that the fairest can bestow.

He that knows not the sound cordiality, and constant warmth of a disinterested friendship, knows not the most that man can enjoy from man.

He that keeps not open a constant intercourse with heaven by frequent fervours of rational devotion, knows not a joy still sublimer than both.

What are the joys of vice, compared to these? What think their deluded admirers of a magnanimous triumph over strong temptation; of a sweet repose in divine favour and protection; of an indefeasible right to life eternal? Is there not a certain grandeur, and solidity of happiness in this? Is not this better than ranging from the gaming-house to brothels; and with other little, fluttering, gilded, noxious, liquorish, insects, to be fixing on every nuisance from delight? Sons of *Beelzebub* the god of flies. I like not a certain, modest faintheartedness in the friends, and advocates of what is right. A Christian should let all see what an animation there is in Christianity above all that the world may admire besides. Christianity should be the boast, as well as comfort, of our hearts.

And now if we enquire after the cause which has brought us into that fool's paradise, on which I have dwelt so long, we shall see with what good reason *Pleasure*, and *Infidelity*, are joined together in my plan.

The Scripture ascribes the conquest of the world, that is, of its Pleasure, to *faith*; and is very copious in enumerating renowned instances of it. Were faith as prevalent in us, we too should prove *Alexanders* in the moral world. All agree, that several goods being proposed for our *ultimate* enjoyment, it is impossible in our *nature* not to chuse the *best*. All agree, that God's promises are better than any thing we can carve for ourselves. And all agree, that they are inconsistent with sin. So that he who will take out his portion in this life, *must* lose it in the next. What then, against our *nature*, and against our *reason*, hinders us from prosecuting our *chiefest good?*—Want of *faith*. All is resolvable into that alone.

For instance. Our temptations are of two kinds. From things that *grieve*, or things that *please*; the former *fright*, the latter *allure* us, from our virtue. From poverty, pain, disgrace, or prosecution, we fly to falsehood, or fraud, for escape. But those ills are not the immediate cause of it; but want of *faith* in God's promises, that, "He will succour us in *those* exigencies; "and deliver us in his good time; and make all things "work together for our good." On the other hand, when Pleasure entices, and carries its point; we do not think those Pleasures, be they what they will, pre-

ferable to heaven. But heaven is at a distance, and the soul is eager for *present* good. But why is heaven at a distance? for want of faith; for faith is "the *sub-* "*stance* of things hoped for; and the *evidence* of things "not seen." It antedates the existence of that which is future; makes "our conversation in heaven, though "we are still in the body; associates us with angels, "though in our solitude; and gives us greater joy in "contemplation, than the world can give in hand." This is true, or the conduct of those heroes in Scripture had been impracticable! and they, like ourselves, were mere men. Thus *Infidelity* leads to *Pleasure*; and *Pleasure* confirms *Infidelity*; and both together consummate ruin.

These gentlemen seem to think that the world was made in jest; that there is nothing of moment, or serious in it. There is nothing else. There is not a fly, but has had infinite wisdom concerned, not only in its structure, but in its destination. And was man made only to flutter, sing, and expire? A mere expletive in the mighty work, the marvellous operations of the Almighty? Is joy *their* point? He that to the best of his power has secured the *final stake* has a *fons perennis* of joy with him. He is *satisfied from himself*. They, his reverse, borrow all from *without*. Joy wholly from without, is false, precarious, and short. From without it may be gathered; but, like gathered flowers, though fair, and sweet for a season, it must soon wither, and become offensive. Joy from *within*, is like

smelling the rose on the tree; it is more sweet and fair; it is lasting; and, I must add, immortal.

As, therefore, I have above offered these gentlemen three expedients for happiness; to persuade their acceptance of them, I shall now give three short maxims, which will sit light on their memories, and (I hope) in time, easy on their hearts.

He that will not *fear* shall *feel* the wrath of heaven.

He that lives in the kingdom of *sense*, shall die into the kingdom of *sorrow*.

He shall never truly enjoy his *present* hour, who never thinks on his *last*.

Let your sister, dear Sir, tell her *grey* pretty fellows, who are apostles to these *Gentiles*, that, if they can advance three maxims of greater truth; or three expedients of greater efficacy to happiness, than those above-mentioned; I am their convert, I exchange my Bible for Bolingbroke; and prepare for the Ball: For N. B. I am but fourscore.

With best wishes to you, and those you love, that is, all mankind; I am,

Dear Sir,

Most affectionately,

Yours.

ON PLEASURE,

IN ANSWER TO ONE RECEIVED.

LETTER III.

DEAR SIR,

THE contents of your letter damp my joy in hearing from you. Even a good man's approaching death strikes us with *some* concern. I am sorry that the sting, which *Pleasure* left in your unhappy friend, occasions so swift a decline. How naturally we lay hold on heaven when the world sinks under us, and will support our hopes no more! The piece of devotion which you desire, you shall receive in my next. I cannot reflect on your friend's distress, and a noble youth whom I myself attended in his extremes, without dwelling still longer on *Pleasure*, which has cost the world so dear.

If disease, and infirmity, make us daily visits in the persons of our neighbours and friends; and death, by the same affecting messengers, gives us frequent notice that he will be with us soon:

If, when death arrives, all mankind, however divided before, unanimously close in one opinion, and one wish:

If libertine enjoyments hasten the approach, and heighten the dread, and imbitter the consequences, of death:

If death is the single event sure, and virtue the single pursuit indefeasible; and the Divine Favour the single point of absolute importance:

If that favour comes so cheap, that the very leavings (in time, care, and expence) of our *real* enjoyments, would go a great way in the purchase of it:

If the martyr's blood makes that purchase sure: and it is impossible that *martyrdom*, and *voluptuousness*, should share the same fate:

If the fate to be shared is endless; and this life but as a moment to an age; and an age not a moment to eternity; and eternity as much ours, as the present hour:

If he, that is over-fond of the *present*, or high in expectation from any *future*, hour, either knows not *this* world; or believes not in the *next*:

If all this is true; that is, if it is day at noon; how happy, like your friend *Eusebius*, to strike early into the right path; and not so long to slumber in indulgence, like the noble youth (of whom I shall soon speak), as to suffer the birth-day of our understanding to be the last day of our lives?

I told you, in a former letter, that I would give you your friend *Eusebius*'s character at large: not, to be

sure for your information; but to place him in opposition to the *Men of Pleasure*: And so,

Facem præferre pudendis.——Juv.

that their deformity may be set in a stronger light, for the benefit of those weak eyes, who cannot see a mountain without spectacles; with whom a *Centaur* passes for a man. Or, rather, who think a Man of Pleasure an extremely happy creature, and, with antient astronomers, place the *Centaur* in heaven. Their *Sagittarius* there, or eternal hunter, ever aiming at *Pleasure*, and ever missing his mark. How very much, the character of *Eusebius* will plainly shew.

Men of Pleasure, notwithstanding all the thorns they meet with in their flowery path, imagine all would enter it, but for want of taste, or spirit, or purse: *Eusebius* wants none of these. He wants not a taste for aught that can gratify either imagination or sense; that can make a coxcomb or debauché; but he is neither. Nor wants he a purse, or heart, to provide those gratifications. His purse is large; larger his heart; but not corrupt, and nobly *wrong*. He is young, gay, rich, expensive. So far he is with them; but will leave them soon, as the sun slides from under an eclipse. *His* riches widen the circle of his virtues. *Their* riches increase the number of their crimes. There are two kinds of expence; in both, riches make themselves wings, and fly away. But widely different in their flight: in one they fly away as an eagle towards heaven; in their flight beautiful, and celestial in their end. In the other, they fly away as an owl to the de-

sart: ungracious and ill-omen'd, in their flight, and ending in the desart of ignominy, and ruin.

Eusebius, though liberal to the demands of nature, rank, and duty; starves vice, caprice, and folly. These (the great cormorants of gold), he sends begging to *their* doors; they, as old intimates, welcome and embrace them all. And if they have not thrice the fortune of *Eusebius*, must soon be beggars themselves. While he, with one half *they* sink in a debauch, lifts beggars (beggars, I mean from fortune, not from folly) into the real comforts of life.

He too has his *amusements*; but not such as deaden, but revive: such as recover the relaxed tone of application; re-animate to new effort; and thus are essential, though pausing, parts of noble, well-judging *industry*. He starts not at a masquerade; nor thinks cards the books of the devil. But thinks all our diversions like long books that were better epitomized; or, like the books of the *Sybil*, which, as they were lessened in number, rose in their price.

He, as well as they, has his parks, gardens, grottos, cascades, statues, paintings, *&c.* but enjoys them more. Not because his are better than theirs, but because he is better than they. His paintings have beauties unborrowed from the pencil; and his statues in *his* eyes appear, like *Pygmalion*'s, to live; though *mere* marble in *theirs*. His all-animating joy within gives graces to art, and smiles to nature, invisible to common eyes. Objects of sense, and imagination, for the greater power of pleasing, are inbebted to the

goodness of his heart. For as the sun is itself the most glorious of objects, and makes all others shine, so virtue itself is the greatest of pleasures, and of all other pleasures redoubles the delight.

He, and they, though they both value riches, yet entertain widely different opinions about them. He considers a great fortune, as his being put, by a kind providence, into its honourable commission for doing much good. They consider it as a privilege, or at least as an excuse, for the contrary. He surveying his ample arcades, and lofty domes, rejoices more in what benefits others, than what aggrandizes himself: rejoices more in considering how many mouths he has fed, than in considering how many eyes he has drawn. He triumphs in reflecting to what numbers he has been enabled, by the divine indulgence, to turn, without a miracle, those stones into bread. They, from their huge Babel-like buildings, contract a Babel-like pride, which turns, with regard to those beneath them, their hearts into stone. Such men, in effect, build *downward*, are the more ignoble, that is the lower, for their height.

He thinks, that heaven's rich donations imply in them some transfer to the public: *they* think they imply a transfer of the public homage to themselves. Instead of imagining his grandeur to be a demand on the public for its homage, he looks on it as the public's demand on him for bounty, and patronage, of which he has erected such proud promises; and by them raised so just an expectation. He thinks, that their

riches (how strangely soever it may sound) run them in debt; and that not to *benefit*, is, to *defraud*.

His humility is equal to his magnificence; and as magnificence with humility speaks more regard for others, than himself, it escapes envy, and ensures general applause. *Their* pride defeats their magnificence, and robs it of that applause which is its single aim: For it is a great authority which tells us, "*That pride is a tree which eats up its own fruit.*"

He knows (what *they* consider not), that splendid superiorities cannot be *neutral*, with regard to the characters of those who possess them; that, therefore, men possess them at their peril; that they must degrade, if they do not exalt them. That heaven, which in spight of different ranks, levels happiness, designed it as the peculiar curse of the great (if they deserve it) to be lessened by grandeur, and illustriously disgraced. That, if *apes*, and *crocodiles*, men hurtful, or ridiculous, inhabit superb piles, they must despair of being worshipped: though, but through vain and keen appetite for public incense, they never had been built.

You see in how many points these men fall short of *Eusebius* in Pleasure from *expence*; which, notwithstanding, is an article on which they pique themselves not a little. And give me leave to subjoin one more particular, which will affect them less than the former, tho' it ought to affect them most of all; *his* wealth has subterranean channels; blesses unseen; and costs the relieved neither blushes, nor thanks. Not one prison have *they* opened; not one tear have *they*

dried; which might speak in their favour, when their *own* begin to flow. The sorrows we have relieved are the surest support in our own. The best that can be said of *their* expences, is, that they are an unwilling encomium on those of your friend.

Sensual, of all our pleasures are the meanest; how low must a soul celestial stoop for them! Yet these our thirsty spunges of sensuality, who suck up every drop of it, in or *out* of, their way, tho' they take up the dirt with it, prefer to all the rest. And in these, if in any, they will venture to dispute his superiority. But, for reasons, some already mentioned; more, most obvious: he is their superior in these. In pleasures *intellectual*, how far are they behind him! and then the *moral*, they are all his own. It is one of their minute, and meagre pleasures, professedly to decline them: And these are the *supreme*. Moral pleasures, though faintly (in this imperfect state), yet truly taste of heaven; and, what is more, insure that heaven of which they taste. And what an inestimable superiority is this! He that can think of death undismay'd,

Extremumque diem vitæ inter munera ponit.——Lu.

has more enjoyment, even in distress, than they in triumph, with every vain amusement turning reason out of doors, lest it should wound them with one whisper of the grave. On how many melancholy occasions in life should we be glad of an asylum to which to fly? How should we be transported with a thought that had infallible comfort in it? And that thought can be

but one; and that one, it is the constant aim, labour, nay boast, of these wise men to destroy.

Eusebius's love of pleasure is equal to theirs; whence then this vast inequality of happiness? He *commands* his pleasues; some he cultivates; some admits cautiously; others sends blushing away. *Their* pleasures *domineer;* scout them away on vilest errands; bid them throw their patrimony in the dirt of prostitution, or debauch; or dungeon them in midnight dens of fraud, and destruction; and command them to whirl it away with a losing card, or stamp it to nothing with a desperate dye. What scaffolds of fatal execution are those guilty boards, where moments determine on fortunes for life; and rage and distraction threaten ruin eternal?

From this thraldom to their pleasures, this wretched impotence of heart it is, that while *he* has but one, and that a most gracious Master, *they* have as many tyrants as there are follies, and vices, in the world. Ten times a day they change their *Pharaoh;* and why? Because his wages are so poor. They have it, indeed, in their power to change their master, but not to break their chain.

The *Romans* once pretended that they had a golden shield which fell from heaven: To secure it from theft, they laid it up among eleven others made of brass. This expedient had been unnecessary against *their* wisdom. They run away by choice with the eleven *counterfeits;* with a multitude of false, ineffectual pleasures, and leave the celestial, as of no value,

to men of less understanding.—Virtue, the delight of *Eusebius*, is a celestial shield against every evil of human life. *Their* pleasures are rather swords, that *pierce them through with many sorrows.*

The contrast how strong! Their pleasures die in fruition, and are remembered with regret. His survive the present actual enjoyment, and are as sweet in retrospect, as in hand. Theirs lessen on repetition; his increase: Theirs create, and aggravate, cala*mities*; his avert most, and alleviate the rest: Theirs hasten death, and heighten its horror; his owe their perfection to his final hour, after having heightened, and lengthened, all the blessings of life. And what a wretch is that happiness, and what an idiot that wisdom, that can offer no comfort in the days of darkness, and the hours of death? In a word, *their* wretched joys flourish, like dismal weeping willows watered by a ditch: Poor the figure they make; flux and obscene the ground on which they stand: *His* flourish, like cedars of *Libanus*, from the fountains of heaven; and are rooted in a rock; the rock of his salvation.

It is this superior ground on which he stands, which imparts that inimitable sweetness of air, aspect, and deportment, which marks him, among multitudes of the gayest, for the gay. *They*, like things gilt, have much to shew; much more to hide; are all darkness within. *He*, like a diamond, is transparent, and shines at heart. He looks, as if *virtue*, according to the wish of some sages, was at last become visible, and shone through him; in person, not precept, mak-

ing a visit to mankind: And man is mended by looking on him.

Now, please, Sir, to observe, to what an astonishing degree that intellectual darkness, mentioned in my former letter, prevails in these men, that would outshine all the world. What is their chief boast? Why this, that they *make the most* of this life. Whereas the very fundamental difference between them, and *Eusebius*, is, That they make nothing of this world, because they design to make their all of it. He makes much of this world, because he holds it as little; because ever having the sentiments, without the terrors, of a death-bed, he never cuts off this life from the thoughts of the next; but sees his whole existence in one unbroken thread extended before him.

But, before I dismiss your friend *Eusebius* (though he has made you a very long visit), I must take notice of one particular more. These gentlemen pique themselves on their epitome of all virtue and religion, *benevolence:* If they had it, it would confute most I have said; and make them very happy: For it may stand as a general maxim, that men are happy in proportion to their good-will: Nor is it strange, that to the greatest duty, should, by nature, belong the greatest reward. But their title to this virtue is not clear. The reason they so loudly pretend to it, is, because they know they have it not. The weakest side of a citadel is to be defended most. *Eusebius*, on *his* principles, *must* have universal good-will. Self-love obliges him to it; and his own happy state of mind

inclines him the same way: For all are most kind to others, when most easy, and pleased with themselves. On *their* principles, that this world is *all;* or, at least, all they will concern themselves about; self-love obliges them to the contrary: And their uneasiness in themselves seconds that obligation: So that you may as well expect to find an angel among the dissolute, as a friend. And, indeed, can any expect that they should love them, better than their own souls? Yet that would they do, if they car'd for them at all.

But, instead of endeavouring to prove what needs no proof, I shall present you with the picture of one of these great lovers of all mankind, if you will promise not to cut his throat; which picture, better than a *Demosthenes*, will prove my point. You will know whom I mean, when I tell you, that he is enamoured of the charms, and deep in the mysteries of *play*. That is, he is so fond of riches (which a good judge * tell us *nemo bonus unquam concupivit)*, of riches is he so overfond, that he is quite miserable if denied a daily chance of being stripped to beggary. Greater professions of friendship can no man make, than this arch promiser: greater proofs of the contrary can no man give. He never did a favour, that proved barren to his own designs, but he sent a curse after it. All his kindnesses are artificial flies; if nothing is caught, they are pocketed again. "*Hook him, or hang him,*" is a favourite maxim of his own coining. He smiles,

* Sallust.

indeed, with great complacency on a crouded levee of devoted friends; with no less than on a hand of good cards. And his hope from both is just the same; that is, so to play them off, as to win his game. That done, if interest, or humour, bids, he throws them aside as a foul pack, and calls for new; to shuffle, and cheat, and play tricks with, as before. He considers fools, as trumps, with which he is sure to win. If there are no fools to be taken in, he makes a pretty good hand of it with a knave of the right suit. If he is so unlucky as not to be blessed with either, he gives out, and, for that time, plays no more: For, without a good hand, a bad heart is insupportable. But prosperity sooths remorse, and lays conscience asleep. This is one who knows the world: which, generally, means, one that knows not God. He never thought of that great, final stake, with regard to which he, that honestly but desires it, is sure to win; and he that plays foul the most dextrously, is sure to be undone. Such is *Avidienus*, such is that *good* man, who, as freely as eat his meal, could lay down his life for his friend.

But, in excuse for such men, I must own, that, for such as place their all here, there can be no shadow of social happiness, but from deceiving, or being deceived. From *deceiving*, and so finding some account in their villany; or from *being deceived*, and so finding some account in their folly. For real friendship amongst them is impossible: And, indeed, to hope a friend in any man, that is not truly his own friend, is absurd.

From this account, it is evident, that the chief fountain of happiness is dried up in their hearts.

A *wretch*, almost smothered with all the reputed means of happiness, would of all objects be the most ridiculous, were it not the most melancholy too. *Diogenes* went about the city of *Athens* begging to the statues; being asked the reason, he said, He was learning to bear a repulse. These gentlemen should learn the same lesson; no statue can be deafer than most of their pursuits, when they ask *real* pleasure of them.

These are the men, who, while Providence lays the reins of free-will on their wanton necks, rush headlong into even unimportunate temptations. But when it shall put *its hook in their nose, and its bridle in their jaws;* when it shall drag them into the condition of your unhappy friend; or worse, when the tattered, convulsed, body shall be shaking out an unwilling soul, loth to leave it for a still worse habitation; then, oh! what a change! It places full before me the last hours of that noble youth I mentioned above. *Last hours* full of anguish! how fit to be remembered by those that wish peace to their own! This is the *funeral* to which, in my first letter, I promised to invite your sister *Sempronia*, and her gay admirers; *Sempronia*, who delights *psallere, & cantare, elegantius quam necesse est probæ*. And what invitation more kind than that for which she may thank me for ever, when other entertainments end? If *they* have their wine, *this* has its nectar. Its cup of salvation, pressed from that

Vine, whose leaves heal the nations, and whose swelling clusters teem with eternal bliss. Funeral solemnities are more for the sake of the living than the *dead*. What a trifle that honour they receive from them, to the benefit *we* may reap from that affecting scene!

Oh! Sir, how affecting! It is still before my eyes. That wretched youth dies again! Again I am smitten with his death. It wounds me even in remembrance: What then, the scene itself! No words can paint it; no time can efface it; I meet it in my dreams; I shall bear it to my grave.

I am about to represent to you the last hours of a person of high birth, and high spirit; of great parts, and strong passions, every way accomplished, nor least in iniquity. His unkind treatment was the death of a most amiable wife; and his great extravagance, in effect, disinherited his only child.

But to my point. The *death-bed* of a profligate is next in horror to that abyss, to which it leads. It has the most of hell that is visible on earth. And he that has seen it, has more than *faith* to confirm him in his creed. I see it now. For who can forget it? Are there in it no flames, and furies?—You know not, then, what a scar'd imagination can figure, what a guilty heart can feel. How dismal is it! The two great enemies of soul and body, *sickness* and *sin*, sink and confound his friend; silence, and darken the shocking scene. Sickness excludes the *light* of heaven; and sin, its blessed *hope*. Oh! double darkness! more than *Egyptian!* Acutely to be *felt!*

How unlike those illuminated revels of which he was the soul! Did this poor, pallid, scarce-animated mass dictate in the cabinet of *pleasure;* pronounce the fashion; and teach the gayest to be gay? Are these the trophies of his *Paphian* conquests? These the triumphs to be bought with heaven? Is this he who smote all *their* hearts with envy at his pre-eminence in guilt? See, how he lies a sad, deserted outcast, on a narrow isthmus between time and eternity! for he is scarce alive. Lash'd and overwhelmed on one side, by the sense of sin; on the other, by the dread of punishment! Beyond the reach of human help, and in despair of divine!

His dissipated fortune, impoverish'd babe, and murder'd wife, lie heavy on him: The ghost of his murder'd time (for now no more is left), all stain'd with folly, and gash'd with vice, haunts his distracted thought. Conscience, which long had slept, *awakes like a giant refreshed with wine;* lays waste all his *former* thoughts, and desires; and, like a long-depos'd, *now* victorious prince, on his bleeding heart, imposes, inflicts, its *own*. Its late soft whispers are *thunder* in his ears; and all means of grace rejected, exploded, ridiculed, is the *bolt* that strikes him dead. Dead even to the thoughts of death. In deeper distress, despair of life is forgot. He lies a wretched wreck of man on the shore of eternity, and the next breath he draws, blows him off into ruin.

The greatest profligate is, at least, a momentary saint, at such a sight: For this is a sight which plucks

off the mask of folly, strips her of her gay disguise, which glittered in the false lights of this world's mummery, and makes her appear to be folly, to the greatest fool.

How think we then? Is not the death-bed of a profligate the most natural and powerful antidote for the poison of his example? Heals not the bruised scorpion the wound it gave? Intends not heaven, that, struck with the terrors of such an exit, we should provide comfort for our own? Would not he, who departs obdurate from it, continue adamant, though one rose from the dead? For such a scene partly draws aside the curtain that divides time from futurity; and, in some measure, gives to sight that *tremendous*, of which we only had the feeble report before.

Is not this then a prime school of wisdom? Are not they obliged, that are invited to this? For what else should reclaim us? The pulpit? We are prejudiced against it. Besides, an agonizing profligate, though *silent*, out-preaches the most celebrated that the pulpit ever knew: But, if he *speaks*, his words might instruct the best instructors of mankind. Mixt in the warm converse of life, we think with men; on a death-bed, with God.

But there are two lessons of this school written, as it were, in capitals, which they that run may read. *First*, He that, in this his minority, this school of discipline, this field of conflict, instead of grasping the weapons of his warfare, is for ever gathering flowers, and catching at butterflies, with his unarmed hand; ever making

" spirit, is full powerful to reason; full mighty to " suffer. And that, which thus triumphs within the " jaws of mortality, is doubtless, *immortal.*—And, as " for a *Deity*, nothing less than an Almighty could in- " flict what I feel."

I was about to congratulate this passive, involuntary, confessor, on his asserting the two prime articles of his creed, extorted by the rack of nature; when he thus, very passionately:

" No, no! let me speak on. I have not long to " speak—My much-injured friend! my soul, as my " body, lies in ruins; in scattered fragments of broken " thought: Remorse for the past throws my thought on " the future. Worse dread of the future, strikes it " back on the past. I turn, and turn, and find no ray. " Didst thou feel half the mountain that is on me, thou " would'st struggle with the martyr for his stake; and " bless heaven for the flames:—*That* is not an everlast- " ing flame; *That* is not an unquenchable fire."

How were we struck! Yet, soon after, still more. With what an eye of distraction, what a face of despair, he cried out:

" My principles have poisoned my friend; my ex- " travagance has beggared my boy; my unkindness " has murdered my wife!—And is there another hell? " —Oh! Thou blasphemed, yet most indulgent, Lord " God! hell itself is a refuge, if it hides me from thy " frown."

Soon after, his understanding failed. His terrified imagination uttered horrors not to be repeated, or ever

forgot. And ere the sun (which I hope has seen few like him) arose, the gay, young, noble, ingenious, accomplished, and most wretched, *Altamont* expired.

If this is a man of Pleasure, what is a man of pain? How quick, how total, is the transit of these *Phaetontiades!* In what a dismal gloom they set for ever! How short, alas! the day of their rejoicing! *For* a moment they glitter, they dazzle. *In* a moment where are they? Oblivion covers their memories.—Ah! would it did! Infamy snatches them from oblivion. In the long-living annals of infamy their triumphs are recorded. Thy sufferings still bleed in the bosom (Poor *Altamont!)* of the heart-stricken friend: For *Altamont had* a friend. He might have had many. With what capacities was he endowed, with what advantages, for being greatly good! But with the talents of an angel a man may be a fool. If he judges amiss in the supreme point, judging right in all else but aggravates his folly; as it shews him wrong, tho' blessed with the best capacity of doing right.

Such, so fatal, when abused, are the greatest blessings of heaven. Heaven grant *his* agonies were an expiation of the past; not a presage, and sad specimen, of the future. That his surviving companions and admirers may never suffer the same, give me leave to speak to them, while this affecting object is (or might be) in their sight.

" Ye staunch pursuers of Pleasure, opening in full " cry on its burning scent! who run yourselves out of " breath, health, credit, estate, and often life, after

" that you cannot catch! For a moment, slacken your " speed, and cool the fervor of your chace. It is a " friend that calls, and he is his *own* that hears.

" If there is a scene on earth, in which you can find " greater advantage, than in that to which you have " been invited, do not come: If there is not, indulge " me in a few words, which may not be soon forgot: " At least, they will recur to your thought, they will " recur to your feeling hearts, when your present jo- " vial chace is over; when *Pleasure* is no more.

" It will be grateful to your friend deceased, whom " you were always willing to oblige, if, with his ac- " complishments, you remember his faults; for then " you will not forget your *own*; but read, in his deep " distress, a strong caution against them. Affords not " the rock on which he split, a solid basis for your " safety? Has he not well marked where mischief " lies? See you not the wreck of that gallant first- " rate? or, rather, is he not a beacon, lighted up by " kind Providence, to guide you safe through the dan- " gerous voyage of human life?

" He once, as you now, imagined himself in this " life, immortal. Was he not mistaken? He has " taken his final flight; whither, who can tell? If you " continue yours, in the same fatal track, who is he " that *cannot* tell where the folly must end? Smitten, " transfixed, when most secure, from the most tower- " ing heights he dropped, at once, into depths of dis- " tress, not to be fathomed by man. In gaiety of " heart defy not the danger. Are there not more ar-

" rows in the same quiver? and are not you as fair and " tempting a mark? more tempting, if unadmonished, " and mounting still over his forgotten tomb. And " whom dare you attempt? An Archer that never " missed his mark.

" But you, from your gay pavilion, embowered in " roses, see no threatening prospects; no dangers of " death.— Oh, Sirs! Death delights to lie hid in " thickets of roses! How often the gayest fall first in " his snare! Yet even this is too gentle, too mild, to " answer the good will of heaven; it cannot keep the " world in awe.

" What uncommon fortitude is needful to bear pro- " sperities unhurt? It is now sunshine with you; and " you think all is well. It is the season of indul- " gence.—But seasons will change. You that are " now all social comfort, gathered close in glad clus- " ters, and (like embodied birds of passage bound " for new climes) on your impatient wing for new de- " lights! what will you do, when each of you, se- " vered from the rest, an unexperienced, unexpected, " recluse, lies sorely pain'd; dreading worse; none " to converse with, but the two greatest strangers, his " own heart, and Him who made it; and neither at " peace with him? Say, ye strangers to care, and " abounders in mirth! what will he do, when he finds " himself still subsisting in a state, where none of " those pleasures, for which alone he wished to sub- " sist, can possibly any longer subsist with him? " When the dark matter at the centre will not be more

" foreign to him, than that which now beats high in " his pulse, and flushes in his cheek? and stings him " on to schemes, that laugh at such lectures as these? " When he finds himself led, by the soft hand of " *Pleasure*, to those dismal gates, which she herself " will never, never, never, enter?

" Consider, my good friends; you still retain the " name of Christians; and have heard of the Scrip- " tures. To speak their language, If Christians are " racers, you have not yet started: If warriors, your " armour is not yet on: If labourers in the vineyard, " you pluck down the vine, and get drunk with the " grapes: If watchmen, your nap is not yet over. " There is no man, but in some part of life, either " stung by self-mov'd conscience, or alarmed by some " providential event, as out of a long idle dream, " starts, at once, into his senses. The longer the " dream, the greater his surprize and pain; and if he " nods to the last, the pain and horror (as too well has " been prov'd) is inexpressible.

" Cannot that awful truth interrupt your slumber? " He sleeps sound indeed, at whose ear a friend's " knell shall knock in vain. But, setting friendship " aside; granting, that with men of your cast, a friend " dead is a friend annihilated; ask, I beseech you, " pure *self-interest* one question; " Have you no con- " cern in *this death? Is it nothing to you?*"——Oh! " much, very much! It cannot stand neuter. It is " big with good or ill. It must hasten your amend-

" ment, or heighten your offence. Henceforth, the " *same* crimes are seven-fold guilt!

" Have you never consulted the workings of na- " ture? Have you never been *surprized* with a serious " feeling of heart? When I stand, though a stranger, " on the verge of another's grave; when I see the " shaken mould take possession of human pride; and " hear the solemn sound of *dust to dust*; what swel- " ling of soul, but instantly subsides? What salutary " thoughts, but, at once, it inspires? The grave of " one unknown, and dying a *common* death, would " have this effect: What then, the grave of a friend, " and of our *own* character; and that not good; and " dying of the follies in which *we* live; and with ad- " monitions in his mouth, and horrors in his heart? " What heart impregnable to such an assault? What " thunder equal to such a groan? It would echo for " ever in a penetrable ear. In a penetrable heart " there would be wrought a mighty change.

" For see you not the mighty force that is implied " in this mercy? Heaven trusts not to your faith; but " gives *sensible* proof of what you have to fear. And " could it do more? Would a miracle suffice?—You " have it in a mercy so little deserved. If danger can " alarm you, you, *now*, are alarmed. If nothing can " alarm you, nothing can save.

" I should grieve to have said too much. Yet, have " I said too much, if my words serve only to render " more inexcusable that imprudence, which they la- " bour to remove. Rather know your danger, and

" embrace the plank (though not of cedar) which I
" throw out for your escape. Our fondness for good,
" shuts our eyes on evil; we scarce allow it existence
" before it is felt. But, remember, we live in a most
" mutable scene; and have the fear of to-morrow be-
" fore your eyes. Not the keenest discernment can
" ken through the second of a minute. To keep
" within the reach of mercy, is the grand concern, and
" supreme blessing of human life.

" My *converted!* or *condemned!*
" farewell."

Thus, dear Sir, I speak to these gentlemen. I wish they do not rather chuse to shew their parts, than their penitence; and criticise my *speech*, instead of their own conduct. If so, they demonstrate how very great occasion there was of *it;* though it proves ineffectual.

Most Yours.

ON PLEASURE.

LETTER IV.

DEAR SIR,

YOU seem to think, in your last letter, that our age is so far gone, as to be past recovery. I hope not. *Aviola*, a consul in the time of *Gordian*, revived on his funeral pile. I will not despair, but that *British* virtue, now, like the *phœnix*, dying in its *sweets*, may start up from its ashes, and re-assume its former glory. I shall therefore proceed a little farther.

I grant, that *The Man of Pleasure*, as well as the good man, has his joy. But their joys are very different. They differ not only in their objects, but their kind. Which is as yet a secret to *them;* and, possibly, to you. Joy from temporals, is a terrestrial joy. And, like all things terrestrial, has a dreg in it. If you observe your own heart, you will find, that joy from temporals, has ever somewhat of a gay inquietude, a disturbed and tumultuous delight. Like some liquors, all in unquiet ferment and confusion, while they spar-

kle, and smile. Joy from eternals, joy, I mean, on spiritual accounts *(viz.) Mens conscia recti;* or, a delightful hope of immortality; or an humble persuasion of Divine Favour, *&c.* This joy is celestial, and, like a fine calm summer's evening, is undisturbed, placid, and serene. The first is a *passion*, and that in the strictest sense; we *suffer* from it, as well as *enjoy*. Nay, some have suffered from it even to death. The latter seems rather to be, or to resemble, an *inspiration*, in which the divine cause takes away, or supersedse, our human infirmity. Therefore, by our church, most properly stiled *The Peace of God.* Nor let *Centaurs* imagine, that this peace is occasioned by the smallness of the joy. No, *It passeth all understanding*; and is, strictly speaking, a specimen, an actual part of heaven.

For, indeed, the *supreme* happiness, and misery, of rational beings, through all variation of circumstances, and through every period of their existence, is of a piece, or of the same kind. Though, perhaps, in no two periods of it, of the same proportion, or degree. Therefore, heaven and hell, how distant soever some think them, are *really*, though not *fully*, on earth. Wherever, and whenever, their causes, that is, virtue and vice, exist, they will exist, in a measure correspondent to them. What then are the *good* and *bad*, but the wretched and happy? He, whose soul reposes on his firm trust in God, like the halcyon that builds on the waves, if storms arise, may be tossed, but not endangered. Or, grant the worst, those tumultuous

billows that devour others, rock him to rest eternal.

When the good man lies down to rest, no fears from the dangers of the night break through his strong confidence in the Divine Protection. When he awakes, his first thought lays hold on heaven; which gives thro' the consecrated day, such a sweetness of aspect and deportment, such a force and firmness to his felicity; that we may venture almost to say, *He cometh forth as a bridegroom from his chamber, and rejoiceth, as a giant, to run his course.*

The Man of Pleasure has his little clouds at the brightest, the course of his happiness is retarded by a straw; and any considerable, scarce considerable, accident puts it quite to death. Not only the necessaries, or conveniencies, but the decorations, and superfluities of life, are *vital* to his sickly felicity. In any of them he may receive a deep or deadly wound. Whereas they are mere excrescences to the good man's happiness; and he has no more feeling in them than in his hair, or his nail: Nay his happiness is of so strong a constitution, that it can stand *real* calamities unhurt. Nor quits its *serenity* on the confines of the grave: which the Man of Pleasure but ill-retains in the sunshine of life.

Of which strange inferiority one cause is very obvious. When all our hopes and fears are confined within this narrow scene, what an insupportable importance, what a tyranny over our passions does this give it? what demi-gods does it make our superiors, who

can bestow, what we *most* value? We tremble before them. What mountains does it make of little things? because the greatest in our inventory? We turn pale, sometimes die, at their loss. But, the first moment we take God for our Protector, and his precious promises for our chief portion, our superiors, even kings, shrink to men; and crowns imperial lose their lustre. Little things *are* little, and leave our hearts at rest. As a taper to the sun; such the sun to the *glories that shall be revealed.* Looking to the close of the drama, we resume our native dignity; nor are longer overawed on the stage, by our fellows; or, perhaps, our inferiors *behind* the scene. Nay, sometimes, *on* it too. When, like poor *Altamont*, they are forced to change their plume for the warm cap of sickness; and are unbuttoning their buskins on the bed of anguish, terror, and death.

And must this, one day, be the case? after having run the gauntlet of disappointing, painful, pleasures, and, for some years, being afflicted with delights; to drop unregarded, unlamented, infamous, into punishment far greater, *for* the punishment they have already undergone.——Of human happiness what a dismal account is this? Yet this is the true. Let us, therefore, enquire if it is not worse than *they* deserve.

Our *Men of Pleasure* affect much being *Men of Honour* to; that is, they are as proud, as they are dissolute: or, in other words, they will not stoop to mean and little vices; they deal only in great. They scorn to pick a pocket: but triumph in cutting a throat. If

their *immaculate* honour is violated by word, look, or thought, then they trample all the laws of religion, justice, and humanity, without remorse. My *enquiry* will join *The Man of Honour* and *The Man of Pleasure* together. But how shall I enquire? How shall I know the heart of these men? And that only can inform me right. Let us then consider what these men's *prayer* would be, if they prayed at all. For what is a prayer, but addressing to some superior power, the real desires of our hearts?

Thus then I will shew you an exact picture of their hearts. There was so masterly a copy of a capital picture of *Julio Romano*, taken by one of his scholars, that he swore it was his own original drawing. I hope so to copy their hearts, that they shall imagine, that it is not I, but they themselves, that speak. The desires of their hearts, if cloathed in words, would run to the following purpose.—But, *first*, this caution: Let not that offend pious ears, which passes in an impious heart; and which, for the sake of *piety* (though, perhaps, not without some shock to it), is drawn out into light.

THE PROFLIGATE'S PRAYER.

" O Thou! whose omnipotence is but a *second* at-
" tribute, an able servant to thy delight. Thou great
" fountain of *Pleasure!* as *such* I adore thee. Plea-
" sure alone makes me devout; and let devotion ad-
" vance my Pleasure. For I am not more devout,
" than modest; I ask not, yet, for heaven. Give me

" my heaven on earth. Let *Mahomet's* paradise de-
" scend, and bless me on this side the grave. Let my
" *honour* too shine before men; and let none see my
" heart,—but Thee. *Noctem peccatis, & fraudibus*
" *objice nubem.* Give my lusts a long and prosperous
" reign over me; and let not religion approach to hurt
" me. Lead me into temptation, and give me strength
" to comply with it. And deliver me from all evil,
" that may mar my delights. Let me be (as I have
" been) a brute while I live, and an angel (if angels
" there are) when I die."

Is the good man shocked at this? Yes; and the profligate too. Few know the foulness of their own hearts. A famous modern, when, in an age he had lost his understanding, passing by a looking-glass, cried out in compassion, " *Poor old Man!*" not knowing it to be himself. Thus the profligate, at sight of this mirror, equally ignorant, no doubt will cry out in surprize, " *Horrid wretch!*" I answer, therefore, to the question above, *viz. Is it not worse than* they *deserve?* That *Men of Pleasure,* themselves being judges, deserve the worst.

In contrast to *this* (and sure it wants an antidote), accept that piece of devotion you desired on your friend's account; and may it prove of some little service to him!

DEVOUT THOUGHTS OF THE RETIRED PENITENT.

" YES, blessed, ever blessed be the Divine Indul-
" gence for *this*. How wanted, how welcome, this
" asylum? this recess? Here earth hold its peace;
" and heaven's voice can be heard. Heaven's voice,
" if we listen, ever speaking in the human heart.
" Here let me commune with my so-long-anxious
" heart; which has frequently called on me for an au-
" dience, and found me pre-engaged. Or else, the
" rude world broke in on our conference; and fatally
" pushed it off till a farther day. Though (shocking
" to consider!) though a depending eternity often
" chid my delay.

" While the noise of the world beats its drum in
" our ears; and its bustle, and hurry, throws its dust
" in our eyes; who can hear the soft whispers of con-
" science, or read the strong demands of reason, though
" written in capitals, on the composed and disenchant-
" ed heart? I now read, hear, and tremble. I tremble
" at that, in which I once triumphed. I blush at that,
" of which I, once, was vain. Oh, *Pleasure! Plea-*
" *sure!* what art thou? The death of reason. And
" with reason dies the whole heaven, as well as cha-
" racter, of man.

" The cloud now a little broken, which wrapped
" me up in night, look round, my soul enlarged;
" and say, where, or what am I? An immensity around
" me! an eternity before me! a shadow, my Plea-
" sure! a moment, my time! a vapour, my life!
" And shall a moment, shade, vapour, engage all my
" love? engross all my thoughts? Shall it bid an an-

" gel from heaven wait my better leisure? Bid the " great Father of angels defer his call 'till to-morrow? " What, O my soul! if He should call no more? Good " God! If He should call no more? If He should " leave thee to thyself?—Where, then, is hope? " Where, then, is man?

" Man, desperate man, the first moment he sets up " for himself, and, impatient of controul, takes the rein " into his own mad hands: the first moment he is at " liberty, he is the greatest of slaves. How shackled! " how harrass'd! how starved! In the midst of his " riots, what a famine of joy! None can be wise for " time, that are fools for eternity. Dreadful indepen- " dence! the first moment man quits hold of his " Creator he drops! In distraction and ruin, how un- " fathomed his fall!

" Out of that deep, I call unto Thee, O Lord! " Lord, hear my voice. Dissolve the charm that ties " me down to delights trifling, terrestrial, infernal; " and give me wings to rise into day, and reach the " things that belong to my peace. Where is the " creature, which Thou hast made? Where is the " heart which Thou hast given? This sink of pollu- " tion! this nest of all vices! it could not come from " Thee. No, I have snatched it out of thy blessed " hand, and let it fall in the mire. What is it to me, " that *thy mercy is over all thy works*, since I am *not* " what Thou hast made?

" I have slept on a precipice, and dreamt I was in " heaven. Slept on its very brink; though vengeance " frowned over me, and flames roared beneath. What

" horrors awake me! What a gulph lies before me!
" What mercy has saved me! Where had I been, had
" I died yesterday? Oh, let this load, this mountain-
" ous load, on my heart, sink me lower, and lower
" still, in adoration that I live! Had I felt *these* pangs
" before,—before I had been reclaimed.—Thou, that
" bearest up the pillars of the earth, support my
" spirits!—Where had I been, if yesterday had been
" my last? Where—oh where?—And eternal too!—
" *Eternal!*—O Lord, God Almighty!—could thy
" thunder shake me more?

" Thou glorious God, who makest the thunder; let
" me climb above creation; and soar into thoughts of
" Thee.—How I wander up and down, bewildered
" and benighted, through the *boundless* of such a con-
" templation? Where, what, who, how, art Thou?
" Souce of all Beings! Centre of all Good! Great
" Antient of days! before the birth of time! beyond
" the comprehension of angels! Filler of Immensity!
" who lookest down on the highest; and the lowest
" dost support?—support even me.

" Support me while I labour at some idea of my
" God—but I labour in vain. Thou most obvious,
" and most occult! most present, and most absent of
" beings! how much of Thee is *enjoyed?* How little
" of Thee is *known?* I am *in* Thee, yet cannot find
" Thee. I can neither go from Thee, nor to Thee.
" Clouds, and thick darkness are thy pavilion! Won-
" ders passing wonders, through the moment of *time*,
" and the immense of *eternity*, guard, and aggran-
" dize, thy tremendous throne!

" Before *such* a Judge, O my soul! art thou to plead " thy cause; to pour out thy deep sorrows, and deeper " sins; to tremble out thy complaint? Oh! let me " annihilate myself before Him. Nor *wretch*, nor " *man*, nor *angel*, is any thing in His sight, 'till he is " nothing in his own. Who, Lord! ever thought on " Thee, and was not confounded? And give me leave " to add, Who, Lord! ever prayed to Thee (as he " ought), and was not blessed? For which *infinite* " mercy, from the first thrones in heaven, to the " meanest worm on earth, be payed all homage, " praise, and adoration; constant, profound, ardent, " and eternal!

PART II.

" Are they that pray, blessed?—But what is that " to me? Dare I to pray? To whom is prayer addressed? " Oh! how dreadful in majesty! more dreadful in " vengeance! dreadful to the blessed above! more " dreadful to man! more still to the sinner! what then " to the deepest in sin? May not I then say (as is said, " Lord God Almighty, of thy blessed Self), *Hell is* " *open before* me; *destruction hath no covering?* " Where then shall I fly? I cannot fly from thy pre- " sence. I dare not stand in it. Should I sink to the " centre, I am still in thy sight. Even darkness de- " tects me! even flight brings me nigh! Oh! Thou " that dost light the sun, as a taper; or tread it out, " as a spark! Why *still* in being, a wretch ever

" destined to pain? Oh! let me be nothing; or, let
" me be Thine.

" And what a nothing, indeed, am I? What a no-
" thing, compared, is man?—Thou that inhabitest
" eternity! my foundation is in the dust. Lord most
" Holy! I was conceived in sin. God most Mighty!
" what weaker than man? Great! Holy! Mighty!
" Three Persons, and One God! Creator! Redeemer!
" Sanctifier! Three Benefactors, and One Being!
" with what indignation dost Thou behold a wretch
" of such complicated guilt? a sinner to Thee, to the
" Public, and Himself?

" And dare I then approach? The presumption
" how great?—But greater to forbear. To sin is bad:
" To despair is fatal. Oh! most merciful Jesus!
" what refuge but in Thee! Yet dare I not meet thy
" face: I come trembling behind Thee. If I touch
" but the hem of thy garment, I shall be whole. Even
" dogs may eat of the crumbs that fall from their mas-
" ter's table.—For that bountiful grant, what adora-
" tion is due? With prostration profound I cannot but
" adore.—What adoration is equal? I cannot adore
" aright. Or could I! I am unworthy to lift an eye
" to thy throne. *My* incense has no odour; *my* an-
" them, no praise.

" But Thou, Lord, wide as the arch of heaven, dost
" extend thy compassionate arms to receive a return-
" ing world. As the sands of the sea are thy mercies,
" and (with horror let me speak it) *my* transgressions.
" I have looked on an unfeeling heart, as a quiet con-

" science: On a multitude of sinners, as an apology " for sin: And on the fashion of the world, as a repeal " of thy laws. I have been thankless, for what Thou " hast most bountifully given: Senseless of what Thou " hast most bountifully promised: Provoking, under " the greatest obligations: Peevish, and impatient, " under the smallest evils: Riotous under thy judg- " ments: And by thy blessings, most unblessed: I " turned them into poison; and by my prosperity was " undone.

" I have studied iniquity as a science: Being vain " of distinction in it; and ashamed of my duty: I have " blushed at the glance of a man, and a man most " mistaken; and set my face as a flint against reason, " and against Thee: I have even borrowed infidel " scraps for the credit of the day; and run in debt for " destruction: Time given for repentance, I turned " over to folly; and made the Divine Mercy a pro- " moter of sin. Nay, I have sinned even beyond my " power. What schemes have I laid, which thy " goodness disappointed? How many crimes have " I committed, which never came to pass?

" With such overflowing of godliness I quenched " Thy blessed Spirit; I have trod, with thy Divine " Laws, thy precious blood, under foot. All this, " Lord! Thou knowest; and yet I still live: All this, " Thou hast seen; and yet hast Thou held thy peace. " Thou hast shortened thine arm; and curbed ven- " geance in air; though called for (if daring *can* call " for thy vengeance) to fall on my head.

" How long, Lord! hast Thou forborne me? And " forborne when thine arrows went abroad: Though " I stood in the first rank of offenders; nor ever lifted " up the shield of devotion; quite naked in sin. My " less vicious companions fell frequent around me; " and dismal was their fall. I washed off its memory " in the next welcome debauch; and the just cause " of remorse but redoubled my guilt. By ad- " monitions unadmonished, by thy mercies unsof- " tened, by my own sentiments unawed, by my own " conviction unconvinced, I censured their con- " duct, and trod on in their steps. I deplored their " sad exit, and posted on to my own: Because spar- " ed, when most obnoxious, I thought myself immor- " tal. In every path of Pleasure, in every flight of " ambition, what gay, sanguine, multitudes of those " born after me, and in every promise of life to be " placed before me, have I seen rise, bloom, triumph, " languish, decay, and die? What a mystery of mercy " is this? And what a miracle of madness am I? " Amid this mighty field of slaughter am I still alive? " —While I doubt if I still live, I live on my crimes. " Nay my very repentance increases the number. " Repentance so languid; so far short of my guilt!

PART III.

" Lord! from that stupendous height, towards " which the cherubims lift up an eye in vain, bow " down thine ear, and hear.—O Lord! hear me *not*. " For what have I to plead? what excuse to cover,

" what palliation to soften, my guilt? Can my confes-
" sion of sin weigh aught in my favour? I fear, not a
" grain; for wherefore have I confessed my transgres-
" sions? because I could not conceal them. Thou
" knowest even those, that are unknown to myself.
" But then, Lord! I have been tempted.—Yes, and I
" have courted temptation. Frail nature has seduced
" me.—And have I not indulged my seducer? Public
" example bore hard on me.—And I rejoiced in that
" excuse. I have sinned with my fathers.—True, but
" I have sinned beyond them. What age for indul-
" gence has so loosened the rein? And who, in such
" an age, has rushed farther in ill, than the wretch at
" thy feet?

" But is there nothing in counterbalance? no dawn-
" ings of good? no pretensions, at least, to virtue, to
" lighten the loaded scale? Yes; I have been an ad-
" vocate for virtue—That I might remove all obstruc-
" tions in vice. I have gone to thy temple—But left
" my heart behind. Nay, I have prayed—But wished
" not what I asked. I have aimed at humility—Out
" of pride. I have given—But without charity. I
" have been kind, the very kindest of men—To gain
" power of being cruel, as the most malignant of foes.
" My devotion to Thee has been absolutely declined;
" yet never have I repented, but of *omissions* in guilt:
" nor ever had a *darling* joy, but what is the parent
" of my *present* grief.

" On searching my own heart, that abyss of corrup-
" tion, I find there is hardly a virtue which my hypo-

" crisy has not worn, as a mask; hardly a vice which " my presumption has not acted under it. By these " abandoned means bringing into discredit virtue of " others the most sincere; and making more heinous " my own deepest guilt: to the public a scarce less " pernicious pest, than a fatal assassin to myself. " Thus, Lord! all my pleas but inflame my indict- " ment; and seeking excuses, but discovers new " crimes.

" But, as I discover new crimes in myself by my " own awakened reflection; by the gift of thy Grace, " I discover new goodness, new glories, new wonders, " in Thee. I have lived in darkness, in the shadows " of eternal death. I wrapped myself up in the world, " I saw nothing; but what had been better unseen, " what made me blind to Thee, But now thy Divine " attributes break in upon me, like the morning; and " awake me to thy presence. I see Thee in every " thing. And seeing, I adore. And adoring, trem- " ble.

" Thine attributes, at once, all lighten upon me; " and strike me, like him of *Tarsus*, thy less persecut- " ing foe; they strike me to the dust. Thy most aw- " ful Omnipresence; thy most incomprehensible " Glory; thy most unbounded Wisdom; exquisite " Justice; and ineffable Goodness! Goodness, how " ineffable! And to me, Lord! to *me* unsupportable. " That chief cause of my confusion! severe upbraider " of my conduct! and terrible aggravation of my " guilty! If thy goodness thus pains me? what then

" will thy vengeance? When thy vengeance awakes " (cover me, O ye mountains!) When thy vengeance " awakes——Oh! mercy! mercy! mercy!——Thou " mighty to save! oh! have mercy upon me.

" And mercy thou wilt have, thou Father of all " mercies! of mercy, redundant, inexhaustible, source! " Thou wilt not condemn him, who condemns him- " self. Who trembles at his own tribunal. Who is " scarce struck with more horror at vengeance, than at " guilt. At *such* guilt! and to *such* a Master! whose " bounties enabled me so signally to sin? and who, " my sin so provoking, so long over-looked.

" But I repent. Lord! I repent—Yet how dry " are these eyes? how hard is this heart? Strike thou " the rock, and the waters flow. Let not him, who " groans under his transgressions, groan under thy dis- " pleasure. Thou Giver, Guider, Lover, yea, Buyer, " of Souls! and, at what a price? Who dost hear the " very thoughts of the wounded at heart? Hear, pity, " spare! Nor let the Lord be angry, if I presume to " add—Oh! spare thy paternal tenderness, oh save it " from its aversion; its *strange work*. Vengeance " is an alien to thy most amiable nature. Ruin is a " subversion of thy most glorious scheme.

" Though common sense has deserted me; and a " *legion* possessed me; though I have contradicted " my own reason; and fought my own heart, which " stood in defence of thy laws; though I have strug- " gled hard for madness; and taken ruin by force; " yet let not compassion be quite a stranger in heaven.

" Let not thine anger burn for ever. Wherefore is the
" Lord angry, because I am a sinner? What else canst
" thou forgive. Because my sin is great? If pardoned,
" the greater the glory. Thy servant is wicked: but
" still a servant. Thy son a prodigal: but still a son.
" Though a son's duty has been wanting in me; lose
" not Thou, boundless love! *all* the bowels of a fa-
" ther. Am not I the work of thy hand? Do not de-
" spise it. An image of thy majesty? Do not blot it
" out. The price of thy blood? Oh! cast it not
" away. Shall things incompatible combine to my
" destruction? Can I be related to ruin, and to Thee?
" Let it be thy blessed pleasure to reclaim, not to de-
" stroy me; if destroyed, thy foe will triumph; if re-
" claimed, there is joy in heaven; and ten times ten
" thousand will sing praise round thy throne.

PART IV.

" But if I am pardoned, who then can be punished?
" What stains can condemn, if an *Æthiop* escapes?
" The regions of darkness are part of thy creation;
" and horrors infernal were not made in vain. My
" crimes, in themselves, how great? as committed in
" defiance of *Infinite Majesty*, they are greater still.
" What then shall I say? To what shadow of excuse
" shall I fly?—Pardon, Lord! the weakness of my
" reason, if I judge, or rather hope, amiss: Thine *In-*
" *finite Majesty*, seems to plead *for* me. Fain would
" I find an advocate in *that;* in that very cause,
" which most heightens my guilt.

" For what, my Lord! am I? a poor complex of " littleness and vanity; the very centre of infirmities; " a combination of all causes, that can call for thy " compassion. Frail flesh, and fleeting spirit! a " moth! a worm! a flower of the field! To-day, and " not to-morrow! at morning, and not at night! not " master of a moment; not a match for a breeze! A " dream! a vapour! a shadow! a thing of nought! " posting through daily doubt and danger, toil and " trouble, into trodden dust and ashes!

" Such am I! such was I made!—and made by " Thee: And now, Lord! wilt Thou make bare an " arm Almighty against me? wilt thou lift up a bolt " that can crush creation, against its meanest worm? " (oh! pardon what distress compels me to plead) " thine *Infinite Majesty* declares against it: that res- " cues the sinner, though it enhances the sin. Does " not my meanness disarm thy might? Is not the " greatness of the offended, the offender's defence? " I am, indeed, unworthy, most unworthy, thy fa- " vour: but am I not unworthy thy resentment too? " Thou that sittest on the highest heavens, and seest " worlds infinite dance beneath thee, as atoms in the " sun!—Wilt Thou, oh! wilt Thou, not remember, " that I am but dust?

" Yes, Lord! Thou will remember it: Thou wilt " remember thy glorious Self: what antient days re- " sound; what wonders Love Divine has wrought of " old. For to whom do I cry? Art thou not He, to " whom none ever cried in vain? Who created not,

" but to bless: commands not, but to preserve; nor " punishes, but to reclaim. Who has not more re- " lieved, than amazed with his extremities of love! " for art Thou not the same Lord, who, though most " offended, as if Thou wert the offender, *beseeches us* " to be reconciled? Who mourns over the impenitent? " and over the impenitent for sins against Himself? " And when his sorrow can't prevail, even weeps in " their stead? those tears obdurate *Jerusalem* would " not shed, didst Thou not take to thy own blessed " lids, which overflowed at the bare prospect of its " ruin? Who, without pious terror, without the great- " est astonishment, can think on these things? or, " who, without comfort, still greater than *that?*

" Nor end our healing hopes of comfort here; not " only to beseech, commiserate, and weep, de- " scended the lord of Glory, and Eternal Life, but to " die. And *what* a death? And after *what* a life? " A life of compassions, without number, and be- " yond measure: What a shining progress, what a stu- " pendous ascent in love? He meets the returning pro- " digal: looks compassion on denying *Peter*: rejects " not disbelieving *Thomas:* admits sinful *Magdalen:* " pardons the taken adultress: and associates to him- " self, in Paradise (where angels casts their crowns at " his feet), a thief from the cross. What a marvel- " lous and most adorable climax is this? And is it " possible for love to rise higher still? Oh! let it rise " higher, and reach even me.

" What am I, Thou most exuberant Fountain of " Love, that I should set a bound to such compassion " as this? Can *ocean* be repelled by a single grain " on the shore? What a triumph of mercy to pluck " the ruined from ruin? What an *omnipotent* action to " save the most lost? Though pleasure has fooled me; " though reason, conscience, heaven, nay and earth " too, in one scale, has been outweighed by a feather " in the other; though, with *Esau*, I sold my birth- " right for nothing; yet, Lord! let these distractions " of thought, these convulsions of heart, these pangs " of the wretch, if not the prayer of the penitent, " reach the foot of thy throne: for His dear sake who " spared not his most precious blood; oh! spare, " pardon, bless; yes, bless me, even me, O my " *Father!* Yes, Thou all-surrounding, all-pervading, " all-sustaining, and all-blessing Majesty of heaven! " bless me, even me, O my *God!*

" *Thou!* who if thou movest thy lip it thunders: if " thou liftest thine eye, the sun is dark: who hast " thy way in the whirlwind; and walkest on the " wings of the wind: who sittest above the heavens, " and hidest thy footsteps in the great deep! But " (above all), whose superabundant effluence, whose " ocean of love, overflows the whole creation! add to " these wonders one wonder more—the forgiveness of " guilt like mine: hear the suppliant voice, see the " bleeding bosom, these throes, these throbs of the " most vile and abandoned—but most repentant, and " heart-broken, of men. . . . .

" *Then*, Lord! come the worst, I will not com-
" plain. My joy shall burst its way through the
" frowns of the world; and the shadows of death.
" Then—*Blessings, and honour, and glory, and power*
" *be to Him who sitteth on the throne, and to the*
" *lamb*, who nails sin to his cross!—Thus will I sing
" in spite of my groans! Thus will I sing with my last
" expiring breath! Thus will I sing for ever and
" ever.

" Amen. O my soul! Amen, Amen."

This, Sir, is that importunate, ardent, persevering, spirit of address, which was suitable to the state of the person from whom I borrowed it. I may possibly (partly at least) suit some others. And I thought it inhuman to gaze, so long as I have done, on the disease, without aiming at some expedient to mitigate its malignity. There is a sovereign balm in prayer.

I know, Sir, there are certain quietists in devotion, saints of great repose in prayer, who may censure this, as too warm. But, when should we be warm, if not when our eternity is at stake? Shall we be warm in our vices? and cool in our repentance? Were our passions given for nothing? or given only as the servants of sin? Is it not heaven, but its reverse, that is to be taken by violence? I, therefore, drop this dispute, not only as *unchristian*, but *undeistical*, too: for, if there is a God, all our affections are too feeble, all the wings of our soul are too few, to be put forth in pursuit of his favour; and being languid in devotion, is, being solemnly undevout. If there is a God, he

gave us our passions, as well as our reason: they therefore, as well as reason, should assist in his service. And, indeed, reason without them, though it may loudly tell, will but lamely perform our duty. How great a part of the scripture must these men's kind of criticism explode? Poor *David* must break his harp, lest it give offence. Even angels have their passions, nor are any beings exempt from the *need* of them on this side the thone of God. Whatever exemption some may fancy in their own favour, let us, my friend, who have seen the necessity of devotion for others, not neglect our own. Nor in the pride of instructing, lose the prudence of safety.

You and I, my friend! lie under two disadvantages in this point: the world's example, and our own years. It is an undevout age: and will you not be surprized to hear me say, that ours is an undevout period of life?—Yet it is most certain, that there is a tenderness of heart, and a susceptibility of awe, with regard to God, as well as man, in youth, which, in most, is wanting afterwards. This want is an enemy we must fight, and fervent prayer, that *sword of the spirit*, is the best weapon against him. Prayer, because the most easy of duties, seems, with many, the hardest to be performed. It costs them so little pains, they think they may as well let it alone. Whereas, it is the supreme, the great, mother-duty; all other duties, and virtues, are its progeny: are brought forth, nursed, nourish'd, and sustain'd by it. Devotion is the sole asylum of human frailty, and sole support of

heavenly perfection: it is the golden chain of union between heaven and earth; keeps open the blessed communication;

—*Geminique facit commercia regni.*——CLAUD.

He that has never prayed, can never *conceive*, and he that has prayed as he ought, can never *forget*, how much is to be gained by prayer.

Dear Sir,

Yours.

LETTER V.

LIFE'S REVIEW.

THE GENERAL CAUSE OF SECURITY IN SIN.

THOUGHTS FOR AGE

LIFE'S REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,

IN this and the following letters I shall touch on five points: *Life's Review: The General Cause of Security in Sin: Thought's for Age: The Dignity of Man: The Centaur's Restoration to Humanity.* The three first are naturally suggested to me, by the world's wickedness, and our own; and our advanced time of life. The fourth, *viz. The Dignity of Man,* is naturally suggested by the notoriety of its reverse in those, for whose sake these letters are principally written. For who can look on *Lucifer* in his abyss, without thinking of that height from which he fell? By which alone we can take any just measure of his calamity. And the fifth point, *viz. The Centaur's Restoration to Humanity,* is forcibly imposed on me by the transporting thought, that *such* an event is possible. Yet should it take place, posterity will scarce believe it:

Annalium nostorum laboravit fides.——L. FLO.

I begin with *The Review of Life:* and that, though chiefly for our own sakes, yet also for the sake of all our grey-headed boys, as *Sudbury, Torrismond, Ironside,* &c. for though beasts of so gross a class as they choose to rank with, scarce deserve to be brought to the manege, yet pupils not yet expelled the school of life, ought still, if possible, to be taught the lesson they have so long neglected; and I offer myself gladly for their tutor; tho' I fear they would prefer a *tetanothrum** to an *apotheosis:* Their erudition will not leave them at a loss to know what I mean.

There is nothing of which men are more liberal than their good advice, be their stock of it ever so small; because it seems to carry in it an intimation of our own influence, importance, or worth. We (for you approved it; *we,* I say), have bestowed abundance of it on our Centaurs, which, I fear, will bring us in but little thanks. Let us, therefore, return from abroad, come to ourselves; and see if our export of wisdom may not be wanted at home. We have censured the aged; are we not such ourselves? Is there no folly to be found, but at assemblies and masquerades? Or is folly not folly, because it hits our own taste? Let us lay the line to our own conduct: Let us drop foreign ware, and put ourselves into the scale.

Yes, my friend! let us make a short visit to our former selves. They are, indeed, great strangers;

*A medicine to take out wrinkles.

nor much to be liked: Yet it is a visit all should make who wish well to the future of life. *A Review of Life* is an employment agreeable but to few; because none *can* look back without self-condemnation; and none *will* look forward but with self-flattery. But though the task may be bitter, it is wholesome too. Ask you, "What advantage from it?"—It is the only way of taking my Centaur's* advice, and *knowing ourselves*. A man can see himself in retrospection only. When warm in action, he is ever looking on something else; on his point in view: Or, if he could see himself, he could not judge aright, either of himself, or others. While warm in action, prejudices, and passions, excited by the *then* present objects, and incidents, corrupt his judgment. But in a cool review, he becomes rather a *bystander*, than the *party*; and is patient of truth. His *then* former rivals are no longer rivals; therefore he judges better of *men*. His former points of view are no longer points of view; therefore he judges better of *things*. He can judge, nay he cannot but judge, as impartially of himself as of the rest of mankind.

Wisdom is the growth of experience: But experience is not the growth of action, but of reflection on it. In an active life is *sown* the seed of wisdom; but he, who reflects not, never *reaps*; has no harvest from it; but carries the burden of age, without the wages of experience; nor knows himself old, but

* In the frontispiece.

from his infirmities, the parish register, and the contempt of mankind. And what has age, if it has not esteem?—It has nothing.

Starting, my friend! from the same goal, thro' different paths, which severed our fortune, not our affection, we have run our race; and now approach its end. Jaded with our long journey, the spur of ambition blunted, and our spirits off their speed, we are glad of rest. In which, reflection on the past is not only *useful*, but extremely *natural*. Look on the stormy sea, whose billows reach the clouds; then on the peaceful lake, where the feather, or fallen leaf, lies unmoved; and you see the difference between the cool evening, and warm meridian of man. Reflection is as natural to one, as action to the other. Unactive youth, and unreflecting age, are equal blanks in the book of life. Man varies no less than those varying insects at which he wonders. In his morning he crawls: long ere noon, flutters, and flies; at evening, chilled into langour, he creeps into corners, lies hid, and sleeps; or, if awake, having but little ground before him, nor that the best: How naturally he looks back on the past? How naturally his winter's evening calls for its tale? And to self-love, what tale so natural as our own? How idle soever our *tale* has been, if we can draw some *moral* from it, that will abate its insignificance, and give it some little weight by making us wiser for the future.

And want we not to be wiser? On how many fruitless friendships, ill-judged enmities, rash pre-

sumptions, cowardly despairs, unmanly flatteries, bold indecencies, idle schemes, airy hopes, groundless fears, opportunities lost, admonitions slighted, escapes unacknowledged, evils improved, blessings neglected, and trifles admired; on what a swarm of infirmities I look back with shame? How ambitious have we been in our attachments, not aware that all, most worth our ambition, we can give ourselves? How fearful of expences, not aware, that, till it escapes the gripe, and takes its flight into some prudent use, money is not *wealth*; that it truly becomes *ours* only by our parting with it? How fond have we been of applause, not aware that human, separate from superior, applause, is the greatest vanity, as well as the most common pursuit, in life? How plainly I now see, that few things are more pernicious than too keen an appetite for applause, except a bold defiance of just reproach? *That* makes coxcombs; *this* felons; this calls for detestation; that, for contempt.

How plainly do I now see, that our ignorance has been great? How often have we been so idle as to complain of our wants; that is, of our capacity of being happy? For, without wants, there would be no desires, and, without desires, no gratification of them; and without gratification of desire, no happiness; for *human* happiness, nay happiness of all created beings, consists in nothing else.

What on retrospect appears to me to be the capital weakness of man, is, that strange ascendant which his wishes have over his understanding: It is this makes a

Centaur. How often have we looked on our wishes as infallible arguments for the certainty of what we desired; when others saw it was an impossible point? And of this capital weakness, a capital instance is, that dying men can scarce believe that they shall die. Are we not now as those yellow autumn leaves, which the first blast sweeps away? Yet we seem to think the green bud hardly more tenacious of the stem.

On farther review, *this* is stranger still: Our friends are our strongest ties to life: When these are cut, what but folly can renew the charm? What re-engage our disenchanted hearts? And what, in my retrospect, is an object more obvious, or striking, than yonder ensigns of death? How the tyrant triumphs? What numerous monuments rise over the cold bosoms that once warmly received us? That shared our councils, our ambitions, our pleasures, and our hearts? Their epitaphs collected would make a volume: A volume how instructive, if read aright? A friend's monument is a friend's legacy; and a richer to the considerate, than any parchment can convey. What, for the most part, is human wisdom, but the melancholy growth of a bleeding heart? The thought of death is the directing helm of life, and he bespeaks a wreck, who lays it aside.

O my friend! how rapid the human march! Men are in haste; how they hurry over the stage? Where are those luminaries in every various walk of fame, in every kind of excellence, and renown, who most fired our ambition, and provoked our envy? Are they not

passed away as *April* shadows over the field; or, by the fire side, a winter's tale? Are not those far-seen, shining lights gone out apace after one another, as little sparks in the fired leaf, or paper, leaving us nothing but ashes behind? And in their ashes is there nothing to be found but sorrow? May we not light on a little prudence in them?

Sorrow, indeed, predominates. Oh, recent wound! Sorrow how just? Whom lost we the very last moon? —Lost *we?* That is vainly sad: Whom lost the public? Whom the whole nation? Few have left it more worthy all love, and esteem, than our friend deceased*. He was made by nature to be beloved; and intitled by virtue to be admired.

——*Quem semper amatum,*
Semper honoratum, sic Dii voluistis, habebo.——VIRG.

Well had it been, if we, like him, had sought *esteem*; but we would not pay the price. *Love* we thought would come cheaper; and seeking that, were in danger of losing both. The wise world will part with nothing, but by force. Love cannot be compelled, esteem may. And, when it is, we lay in it, at the same time, the surest foundation for lasting love.

My retrospect shews me a *transitory* love of which we have been too fond. A love often bestowed by great ones, on those whom they cannot esteem. This love, supposing it sterling, I *(stultus ego!)* returned in

* Sir J. S.

kind: But I do not repent it. I may not repent of my virtue; For, my friend! there are two sorts of charity in the world, and which the greatest, is hard to say. We are bound in compassion to help the poor to *live*, and the rich to *enjoy*; who feel a pain peculiar to themselves, that of being mocked by abundance, which denies them their expected happiness; happiness in proportion to their purse. All I learn from such *ardent* lovers (for such generally they are) is, that it is dangerous to dip into most men below the surface, lest our curiosity should rob us of our good opinion of them. Much decorum, little homage, is requisite. My whole life tells me, that a just demand for *esteem* is sacred, but rare. We may well afford to pay it, when it is *due:* Nor must our *love* be withheld, where it is *not.* Universal love enjoined, is designed as an antidote against reciprocal contempt; and as a discipline to human pride, which must stoop to love men in their infirmities and *faults:* Nor is it more our duty, than our prudence; how else could we hope quarter for our *own*; which both tell us of others faults, and bid us forgive them. For many of them we should not suspect, but from the whispers of their parallels in our own bosoms. And therefore, by not forgiving them, we condemn ourselves. If, then, we would be forgiven by ourselves, or others, we must forgive. A truth for which I thank my present Review.

What I like least in this survey, for fear it should prove our own case, is *this;* I find old men apt to

think well of themselves, not because they fly vice, but because vice is fled; repute themselves virtuous, because free from boys offences; set down impotence for victory; and triumph, because they have not fought, because they meet no foe. And what makes me even tremble, is, I see some, who, blameless in youth, are overtaken by folly when in years, and (of all sights the most deplorable!) I see them dragged by their white beards into the foulest enormities. Faults which are the natural growth of the distinct periods of life, may meet with some toleration: But the monstrous growth of vices out of season no man spares: Because the hot-beds of *Lucifer* only can raise crimes, in which *nature* has no hand.

Heaven avert from us such an end! for, far from blameless was our beginning. In our early days (called the days of innocence), we had our little villanies; our vice in miniature: As years and temptations increased in years less ripe, than in iniquity, we were no petty criminals, before we were men. We wished, indeed, for wisdom; but what wisdom would have avoided, we made our favourite choice; what wisdom would have chosen, we bid wait till to-morrow. Frequent were our quarrels with our faults; but rarely pushed on to a parting. Pleasure had its charms, and virtue its efforts; and sometimes, in a passion, threw its rider. But triumphs of passion are but short. No rebukes are so powerful as those from our own conduct. Affords not this, then, a strong caution for the

future? The distempers of the past periods of our lives are the best antidotes for those to come.

Retrospection imforms me, It was *now*, open war with our enemy; *now*, perfect peace: How easy sin sat on our hearts; and called itself spirit, wisdom, anything but what it was? When some merciful discipline awaked us from our trance, we fought; and we conquered; But what was our conquest? Such as rather marred our wrong enjoyments, than wedded us closely to the right. We *called* the right our beloved, our spouse; but often committed adultery against it; thus losing the joys both of the sinner, and the saint: So motley a creature is man; as mutable as God is fixed. Ours, indeed, was no uncommon case: But others faults are not our absolution. An absolution it is, however, with which many are content: Tho' his Holiness could scarce give his saints one more ineffectual and vain.

Who is he, my dear friend, that can absolve us, or condemn?—Look through thy whole past life, and answer. What year, nay, what day, has passed unimpowered to vouch for *his* clement, and absolute reign? See I not, in numberless instances, the naked hand of Providence stretched out, as it were, on this side the clouds, pointing us to good? Now, shewing how little this world can give, by pouring on us the full enjoyment of it; to turn our hearts on a better. Now, shewing us, by the calamities of others, how much we may suffer in this world; to keep us in awe, though ourselves were unhurt. Now, breaking to pieces all

our own schemes, and raising our happiness out of their ruins; to teach us humility, gratitude, and on whom to rely; shewing us, that most of our triumphs are errors; and our disappointments, escapes. Now bringing us, when most secure, to the brink of the grave; to repress presumption. Now snatching us from it, when past all human help; to kindle devotion, and forbid the pain of despair. Now defeating us in spite of all our wisdom; now blessing us in spite of all our folly: blessing, to sweeten life; the contrary, to wean us from it; and thus in both worlds to provide for our welfare, as far as the nature of humanity will admit.

What a glorious image of Divine goodness is this? The wisest cannot pay half its due in their highest opinion, nor the best in their profoundest acknowledgement, of it. And can we not shew as inglorious a portrait of human *weakness* in ourselves? How are our two different paths of life equally strewed over with follies? with follies thick as autumn leaves! but not thick enough to hide our faults: So numerous both, that I am quite disinclined to look longer backward; and hasten, for refuge, into some change of thought. And here, shall only add, that man overlooks the most instructive book in his study, if he reads not himself.

And now, I fear, you will say, that how *useful*, and *natural*, soever Life's Review may be, yet you can find but little pleasure in it. In it there is no pleasure to be found, but what has cost us some pain; but what

we have fought our way to, thro' nature's perverse byass, and besieging temptations. Unbought pleasure is not the growth of earth: This is a militant state; nor must man unbuckle his armour, till he puts on his shroud. For the most victorious veteran may meet with a defeat. Nothing in Life's Review can give delight, but what we may call our trophies, or spoils taken in war. All else is vanished as a dream.

What have I said? vanished as a dream!—Would to God it was! 'tis *not!* Far from it! Every moment is immortal! Every moment shall return, and lay its whole freight, nothing lost, its every whisper, every thought, before the Throne: The Throne of him who sent it to man on that commission; and commands it back, at the stated day, to make its report; to be registered in eternity, for the perusal of angels, and the justification of their King. Tell our gay triflers, that there is no such thing as a trifle upon earth. Can any thing be a trifle, that has an effect eternal? Tell them, tho' they are so well assured, that there is nothing serious upon earth, that *time*, to man, is, in some respects, a more serious season than eternity: That *his* eternity is absolutely the creature of time: That 'tis foul, or fair, rejoices, or laments, as time, *omnipotent* time! (that trifle which they throw away) ordains its fate. If they doubt it, let them ask their jovial companion, who died of *their* happiness last night.

Many, my friend! have made a worse, many a better, use of time than we have done. Many have been more criminal; many more innocent. But most men

imagine that innocent, which has a *negative* guilt. An idle day is a guilty day, in a life so short and precarious; with more than human thought can carry, incumbent on it. There are not more spots in the sun than in the life of a saint.

What then are we?—O my friend! at half a glance through life, I perceive, that, though we have made a shift to creep out of the *Augean stable*, yet have we not scaled the temple of virtue: though we made the choice of *Hercules*, yet we wanted his strength: though we, sometimes, lopped one head of the *Hydra*; yet, too often, seven shot up in its stead. Whereas, on the contrary, they that have been long tossed by folly, when once landed on a good life, should *burn their ships*; as *Cæsar* once burnt those of his legions on the *British* coast: I mean, that the warmest resolution should destroy the very desire of embarking in ill; and so render a return impracticable.

Such, then, being our feeble attempts, so slender our pretence to wisdom, it becomes us to give those, whom we have so freely treated, their revenge. To confess, that, though we are not quite *horizontals*, yet neither are we quite *upright*; and, though we have set up for reformers, yet we are not, altogether, men.

A *man*, my friend! is a glorious being; a great rarity; there are but few to be found. A *man* is an exalted character, doubly great; he is an hero, and a king. Few kings are so great, as to reign over their own hearts. Few heroes so victorious, as to drive *do-*

minions, *principalities*, and *powers*, before them. Both these meet in a *real man*: He ranks, in *reality*, but a little lower than the angels: nor long, so low.—O friend! man is a wonderful being! Anon, I will tell thee what thou art; and (mark what I say), I will surprize thee with thyself.

At present, only this.—Dare we say, that we are arrived at the character I have mentioned? No. Dare we say, it was not in our power? No.—Why then this cowardice in a *possible* hero? Why this disloyalty to himself, in a *possible* king? Whence this reproach to reason, and immortality? Whence this inglorious, and absolute desertion from our godlike selves? Sounds that too high?—In whose image were we made? I foresee your objection; I grant that image is impaired: but I quit not my point; I dare affirm, that beings which are free, rational, and immortal, may be gods in due time, through Divine Grace, if they please.

How deplorable our distance from it? Whence this *unmanly* defect? Know we not that, unless our conduct is that of a man, it had been better for us, if in a lower species had fallen our lot? Why were we called into being? What we have enjoyed already poorly pays our mothers pain, and our own. Wouldst thou repeat thy part in the comedy? act it o'er again? Wouldst thou be rejumbled in this rough *Thespian* cart, dragged on by those two skeletons, half-starv'd *hope*, and panting *expectation*, through bad roads, *now* worse and worse, and thy fellow-strollers in a con-

stant conspiracy against both thy pay, and thy applause; how well soever thy part is performed; how great soever thy indulgence is to them?—Thou wouldst not. Here and there, indeed, we might pick up a lucky hour, *alboque notanda lapillo*, that might make us smile again. But nature, and indeed reason, starts back at the whole. If we should find a small pearl in one oyster of a million, it would hardly make us fishers for life.

Wouldst thou, then, cease to be?—No, nature shudders at it. That horn of the alternative wounds more than the former: If so, our wishes, as well as our nature, push us into eternity. And shall we *fear*, what we *wish?* Fear it we must, unless we provide a good reception there. We have provided for to-morrow, and to-morrow was not satisfied. If we provide for eternity, our satisfaction will be full. We have provided for many years; for more than we shall ever see; but not for those which will never end.

How great the dishonour, my dear fellow-criminal! in us, who were not blind to the grand futurity, were not cold to the divine rewards; to let the glowing thoughts of immortality so far mingle with the dregs of sense? Is not this, with the wings of an eagle, to drop into the mire? *There* lies the *pleasure* of which the world is so fond; that bane of private property, that presage of public slavery, that sure annihilation of a rational creature, and as sure a creation of a wretch eternal. *Pleasure* has robbed earth of more

lives, and heaven of more souls, than the body collective of all other evils discharging their whole quivers on man.

Our weakness, and our security under the consequences of it, is no uncommon case. Blushing I look round for its fatal cause. And I do not find it, where, if found, it must increase my confusion? Do I not find it in the *great goodness* of God? If so, how must that reproach and brand the deep ingratitude of man? And, I think, I find it there.

THE GENERAL CAUSE OF SECURITY IN SIN.

FOR, consider, my good friend! what can he do that ventures to continue in sin? He cannot defy the wrath Divine; that is not in man. He cannot acquiesce under the terror of its consequence; he must therefore presume on Divine mercy. "I know myself "worthless, yet earth pours its blessings. I know "myself worthless, yet heaven buys me with its blood. "What is to be feared, what is not to be hoped, from "*such* a God? Be my crimes what they will, some yet "unrevealed expedient will be found for my safety. "For *God is Love.*" Thus, possibly, he may reason: and thus, at once, do two strange things: cite Scripture to his ruin, and make the mercies of God fatal to man.

God, indeed, is love: but shall man therefore be a monster? And a monster in the judgment of all men? All confess that there is an admirable consent between

the precepts of virtue, and the sentiments of our common reason. All confess, that virtue receives a constant approbation from the uniform verdict of our consciences. All confess, that virtue practised brings in the greatest happiness to society: He, therefore, that is not virtuous, can give himself no satisfactory account why he was born either with reason, or conscience, or a desire of happiness: since he has nothing of what they all demand from him. And, therefore, he must appear an unaccountable being; that is a monster, not only to others but himself.

This is more than enough to make vice our aversion, though God were love to that absurd degree, which our folly may fancy, and which our vice most certainly wishes, and wants. But there is no *such* love in Him: It is blasphemous to suppose it. God *is* love, and therefore—what? That which many may least expect —therefore God is *terrible:* From whence arises his marvellous love to man? Of man He has no need; the Divine happiness is complete; in man He sees no merit; He knows we are worthless, as well as we ourselves; But then, far better than we, He knows that we are—*immortal.* That therefore (most interesting, and most alarming thought!) that therefore, we *must* suffer, or enjoy, for ever!

Hence, be most assured, my friend! his regard for man. Hence, for a worm, to-day crawling out of the earth; and to-morrow, more despicably still, crawling into corruption; his compassion, his solicitude, his councils held on high; and all the wonders of his love. Wonders?—much more than wonders to man; they

are wonders in heaven! They strike with amazement the first angels of light.

Conscious of thy own meanness, canst thou scarce believe that Divine indulgence should thus abound? Consider: God, indeed, called us out of the *dust*. But He called us into an *eternity*: An eternity, henceforward, commensurate with his own: And shall not his concern be commensurate in degree, bear a proportion to his gift? Shall not one shew as much of the Great God as the other? As he has made us *immortal*; He has made us also *endangered*, creatures. Creatures that must, necessarily, stand the most important, and incomprehensible consequence of their own doubtful conduct for ever. Does not this abate thy surprize at such abundant indulgence? It must, if *God is love*, and vouchsafes to look on us in the mentioned light. In that light He looks on us. Thence his more than paternal bowels of compassion for the most unworthy of men. Thence his omnipotence exerted in giving proofs of his love.

But why, sayest thou, is this love *terrible?* Is not that love *most* terrible which tell us we are in danger of being eternally undone? And *this* love tells us so? for (as I conceive) it never had existed, had not that been our case.

How deep then, and deplorable, is their mistake, who presume to sin, because God is so good; when God is so good purely because he knows that presumption will be their ruin? Who presume on impunity for sin, because God is so good; when God is so

good, purely because He knows that sin, and impunity, are incompatible? Such men make a demonstration of their danger, the basis of their security; and fear nothing, because an Omnipotence, that is solicitous for their welfare, gives proof that He is apprehensive of their destruction.

Such men reason ill. Still worse, experience cannot convince them. What their experience of every day, every hour, proves to be true, they will not believe: They *doubt*, if they shall be (not to use a harsher word) condemned for their sins. Yet they *know* that they shall die. Now, as I take it, their death is a prelude, and assurance, of their future condemnation; for, if beings, originally immortal, die for another's sin, can it be doubted, but that they shall be condemned for their own? And that death (which is a demonstration that sin shall not escape unpunished) is unavoidable, they are convinced by their *senses:* Unless our Centaurs, therefore, lay aside their senses, as well as their reason, for the future they must forego vain hopes, too frequent, and too sanguine, among them: nor longer turn a proof of immortality into a presumption on impunity; Heaven's indulgence, into destruction; and gather poison from the tree of life.

I know not, my friend! if others have urged these arguments, with regard to the cause of God's great indulgence to man, and the certainty of punishment for sin; but to me they appear of a very weighty and affecting nature. There are some truths of the last moment to men, which, at first aspect, have somewhat

surprising in them: they require, and well deserve, our second thoughts.

I will give you two; one from Scripture; one from my own thoughts: "*With the Lord there is mercy*, "therefore *shall He be feared.*"—*With man there is immortality*, therefore *shall He tremble.*—Tremble at himself! Tremble at his own power, which can give what colour he will to a whole eternity. Tremble at his own glory; that he has angels for his guard; and an Almighty for his friend. Yes, tremble at all that might incline him to triumph: for these grandeurs, that inspire presumption, increase danger: are magnificent assurances that he may be plunged beyond hope; be lost past retrieve.

God, indeed, forbids our despair: but not because his love will save us in our sins; but because despair stops all effort at amendment; and without it his love desires our welfare in vain. His love is such, as to give us encouragement, and support, in every thing, but sin: such as to support our spirits amid the ruins of a falling world; but not under the cloud of one unrepented guilt.

This flings light on a part of Scripture, which has a cloud on it in some eyes; and with others quite ruins its credit: *Work out your salvation with fear, and trembling:* A strange text to those, who fear and tremble at nothing so much as at a disappointment in their lusts. Our salvation must be *worked out:* Wishing, and willing, will not bring it; hoping, and confiding, will not procure it; it will not come by chance;

no, nor by gift, and infusion. It must be worked out with *fear;* because fear is the strongest guard of diligence, without which, this work cannot go on; and with *trembling*, lest we should think too lightly of the Divine justice; and lest our very confidence should betray us, even though we were good men: for good men have failed purely from a good opinion of their own state. For a good opinion begets security; security begets negligence; and negligence temptation; and temptation, a fall: and (if unrepented) a fall into that state, where our *first* wish will be, that we never had been born; and (worse still!) where there is no *last.* Pain is sometimes so great even *here*, that we lose our senses; *there* it will be far greater; and (how terrible to say!) our senses will *not* be lost.

THOUGHTS FOR AGE.

ON the bank of that state we, *now*, stand: That post of wisdom, if ever men are wise; which is the reason why they wish it may be long before they arrive at it; for folly is the favourite of mankind: And is it not *our own?* Though there we stand, we scarce believe it; so much our wishes obstruct our belief: or, believing, scarce know what being *there* means; so much familiarity takes away our attention; and robs things of their power to strike strong on our minds. *Eternity* has so often passed our lips, that it has forgot its way to our hearts. Did it enter there,

would it not extinguish every earth-born passion in them? Yes; as the sun, the smallest spark of fire.

Though we stand on its awful brink, such our leaden bias to the world, we turn our faces the wrong way; we are still looking on our old acquaintance, *time;* though *now*, so wasted and reduced, that we can see little more of him than his *wings* and his *scythe:* our age enlarges his wings to our imagination; and our fear of death, his scythe; as *time* himself grows less. His consumption is deep: his annihilation is at hand.

Should we not then turn us round, and look on eternity? That glorious home of all that survives, and outshines the sun; that kingdom of souls immortal! Of immortal souls, *time* is only the maturing womb; from eternity they wait their *real* birth. Are we, my friend! matured? Or shall we prove abortive to the world of glory? If we were mature, why tarry here so long? By protracting life, Heaven shews not its favour to those that are fit to die. Is not, the business of our day undone, the cause why we are suffered to sit up so late? To be so long on our weary legs, after the common hour of human rest? I fear it is. I much fear we are permitted to live, purely because—we do not deserve it.

Is it not, (my languid fellow-traveller in the deep vale of years) high time to be wiser? lest the greatest of curses should fall on us, that of being wise too late: Which is the most emphatical definition of a fool. The world is worn out to us; and we are worn out to the

world. The world, which knows its own interest, quits us, as rats a ruined house; if we knew *ours*, should we not quit the world, as bees an exhausted flower? We can make no more honey of it! its sweets are gone. Where are its formerly sweet delusions, its airy castles, and glittering spires? Are we not left on a lonely, barren, briery heath, to grope out our weary way, through the dusk of life, to our final home? Shall not the dissolved inchantment set the captive free? Are we *Torrismonds* or *Sudburys?* Shall our dotage rivet our chains, when kind nature would knock them off? To speak a language even Centaurs may understand, "A last card, well played, may yet win the "game!"

Consider, are we scheming still? Stretching out a trembling hand, which wants to be supported, to grasp at the nothing that comes next? Any thing now gained would rather mock, than enrich us; can any thing be rich that cannot be enjoyed? Grasp at new *faculties*, and new *powers*, if thou canst find them, or new objects will only laugh us to scorn. But hadst thou even *those*, if the value of things is in proportion to our term in them, their price at our market should fall very low.

It is a good thing to know when we have *all*, and laugh at that cheat *more*, which is ever stealing our hearts. But it is as uncommon, as good. Hence, seniors are milking the world after it is dry. Is it not a shame that we should be gleaning sublunary *straws*, when our harvest of life is over? hoping an after-crop

in our stubble? Though called to diadems, where harvest is perpetual; where an harvest, more than golden, profusely crowns an eternal year?

As to the pass which is so much feared; the dark, subterranean entry to future life; into which our weak imagination peeps, and starts back; as a child at a shadow; all thanks to the blessed Gospel, we know what will light us up a lamp in it, and lessen its formidable gloom. I have seen a death-bed, the reverse of poor *Altamont*'s, where the bye-standers were the greatest sufferers; and the king of terror, by christian patience, was over-matched. The power of religion shone out without a veil; nor could any rising suspicions of hypocrisy dim its lustre. In such scenes as these the human heart is no longer invisible toman; and a glimpse of heaven is discovered in such a sight.

We know what can make us sleep sweetly in the dust; what can smooth the rough transition; soften death into a sort of translation, which interrupts not (blessed be God!) our existence; nor our peace. In peace have many died; and, therefore, it is certain, all *may*. The whole secret for obtaining that peace is an absolute resignation to the most High; which (as hard a task as it seems to some) at the bottom is no more than owning him to be God. And a contrary conduct (as little as it is considered) has atheism, partial atheism, in it. It is questioning some of his attributes, though not denying a God. May that peace be thine! My heart beats with ardor for thy present peace, and future bliss. May I share it with thee! What a poor broken

embrace, what a sad fragment of friendship, is that which ends at the grave? Such a transitory tie gives a second dart to death; and a double dissolution to departing man. That of soul and body scarce more severe.

Would to heaven! that all friendships were, *evidently*, friendships of immortal men. Such, I mean, as gave proof of their having each other's *eternal* interests at heart. Modern, at least, fashionable, friendship flows from a polluted source; it tastes too strong of earth; without the least tincture of *man* (as above described); without the least spirit of *immortality* in it. Nay, worse; it often springs from causes that will not bear the light: and resembles the dark streams of *Alpheus*, and *Arethusa*, that mingle under ground: it should rather resemble *Eridanus*, which is said to flow from heaven.

How many have we of these subterranean attachments? What is it ties our Centaurs together in so long a *string?*—Leaping together the same barriers of the decent, and the just; ranging the same forbidden grounds; gorging at the same manger; neighing the same inflammatory tune; or being daily rid, and sorely galled, by the domineering insolence of the same inflamed mistress.

Since such their accomplishments, I hope to levy a *Lapithean* infantry sufficient successfully to carry on the war now opened against them.—As *Chiron* blew the trumpet which called the *Greeks* to the siege of *Troy*; I hear there is a modern *Chiron*, who sounds

as many instruments, as *Nebuchadnezzar* did to summon his idolaters: and that he raises forces, and ceases not to carry on the war, at a *vast expence.* Doubtless he was typified of old by him who is said in *Virgil*;

Ære *ciere viros, martemque accendere* cantu.

For my own part, my friend! I fancy my campaign will soon be over. I have frequent pains; and, I think I hear the Master call. If so, should we not leave this world, though not yet admitted of the next? Have we not been, through life, anxiously providing one year for the next? And shall we grudge to pay half that pains for an eternity?

Consider, my *immortal* friend! should we not leave the world, before the world leaves us? It is dismal to be left. There is a noble absence from earth, while we are yet on it. There is a noble intimacy with heaven, while we are yet beneath it. If our affection flies thither, we shall be welcomed by superior beings, and not be missed by men who delight in novelties; or, if missed, admired the more for being *once* in the right. They must be somewhat out of this world, who would be deep in the concerns of the next; and is it not time we should be so? Till the business of life (as it is called) is over, its *real* business is rarely begun: nor always then. Age is apt to carry its allowed title to repose too far: age is the most busy period of human life. But its transactions are not with men. Therefore that absence above-

mentioned is most fit for us. It is a sort of a third state between this world and the next. How proper then, for the reception of those, whose term is out, here, according to the common age of man.

And can it be hard for us to lay this world aside, since they that have fared the best in the world, have only the fewest objections against it? Is it not an old tragic comedy read over and over, which by no means,

—— *Decies repetita placebit?*——Juv.

To speak in the licentious stile of comedy, man is a mule, of mixed origin, of heaven and earth: earth has had more than its share of us; give heaven the rest: and that for a *double* reason. All know that hope is life's cordial: it works miracles; without happiness it makes men happy. What have been all the pleasures of our former years, but joyous prophecies, and bold promises, in the name of to-morrow? Worldly *hope* in age expires. If he provides not another hope, a man of years, and a man of misery, mean the same thing. Therefore the same steps are to be taken, whether we would sweeten the remaining dreg of life, or provide a triumph for eternity.

The worldly wishes, which an old man sends out, are like *Noah's* dove; they cannot find whereon to light, and must return to his own heart again for rest. His natural, and, perhaps, most allowable and proper wish, is for respect. But respect for age is a *virtue*. I need say no more to convince him, how little

of it he must expect: and, indeed, he but ill deserves it from others, who, by doating on the world, denies it to himself.

When infirmity drives the world from us, or disease confines us to our chamber, shall we not be all alone with the great Father of spirits, and searcher of hearts? Is it not worth while a little before-hand to practise our lesson, that we may be the better prepared to sustain such an interview? Our wisdom cannot add to the days, but it can lighten the burden, of life: and lessen the terrors of death. Death forgot in youth is folly; in age, madness. With regard to that king of terrors, how many in years *borrow* the security of youth; for it is impossible it should belong to them. Happy they! whom death when he comes, shall find at home; his visit will have less of terror in it. Out of pure decency to the dignity of human nature, of which the decays and imperfections should not be exposed, men in years, by recess, should fling a veil over them, and to the world be a little buried, before they are interred. An old man's too great familiarity with the public is an indignity to the human nature, and a neglect of the Divine. A greater intercourse with it than the calls of duty and virtue demand, is indecent, irreligious, and contemptible; speaking acquiescence in contempt, dotage on the world, and oblivion of eternity. His fancying himself to be still properly one of this world, and on a common foot with the rest of mankind, is, as if a man getting drunk in the morning, after a long nap, lifting his

drowsy lids at sun-set, should take it for break of day.

But grant him to be still of this world; grant him all it can give; what is this world, but a machine played on by us by our *great enemy* for the dissipation of human thought, whose scattered rays must be collected, as it were, to a focal point, in order to duly warm our devotion; and set a pious heart on fire? And can any happiness subsist in age without piety? Impossible! Its intimacy with the world, is not for the pleasures it can give; they are past: it is purely to dislodge the thoughts of death, which intrude at that season; that is, it is purely to decline the pleasures of heaven.

Why, my friend! is our day of trial extended beyond the expiration of the common term? Is it not indulged to the great need our past conduct has of it? And shall our folly reverse the kind intention of that Divine indulgence to us? Shall it set us farther from our God? I am never so strongly struck with the weakness and depravity of man, as when I see grey hairs playing the fool. Hope, which in other evil appearances supports our spirits, fails us there. What can shock common sense, what can create amazement, if not the failings that would dishonour youth, in those that are miraculously alive after the stated period of human life? This is an outrage to reason, beyond the boldness of the desperado that confounds us most; this out-dares the felon repeating his crime, not only under the gallows, but with the cord about

his neck. Where is that world into which you and I were born? It is under-ground; and a generation of strangers are dancing over our coevals long since in the dust. Where is that world into which we *shall* be born? Far, far above the sun, if, while *we* are beneath it, we behave ourselves like men. But if this life was our only concern, consider, that nothing but being born wiser, that is better, than those born after us, can possibly rescue the decays of age from aversion and contempt.

Fain would I have my pen of some service to the aged, now my nearest relations, those of blood, are no more. To the former am I related by like date, duty, interest, and above all,

——*Nunc ipsa pericula jungent.*——Ov.

Still eager in worldly pursuits, warm in the chace of shadows, shall we rush, as down a precipice, and leap plump into the jaws of *extempore* death?

No, let us halt in our career; pause on the brink; and provide for our eternal peace. Can I better express my love than by pressing it on thee? I press it strongly. And know, my friend! that Heaven, and (as I have shewed thee) a most indulgent Heaven, joins my pathetic wish; and angels, ardent angels, say Amen. And what want they? (mark it well, they want nothing but thy *own* concurrence to crown their wishes for thy welfare.

Dear Sir,

Yours.

LETTER VI.

THE DIGNITY OF MAN.

THE CENTAUR's RESTORATION TO HUMANITY.

THE DIGNITY OF MAN RESUMED.

THE CONCLUSION.

THE DIGNITY OF MAN.

HERE, Sir, I enter on that elevated theme, *The Dignity of Man.*

Major rerum mihi nascitur ordo.——VIRG.

I shall scale the summit of human nature, and set its dignity in the strongest light; that the contrast may strike our Centaurs with a just sense of their own ghastly condition; and more clearly demonstrate the depth of their fall. Many are for degrading their nature, that they may lessen its duties; and for looking on themselves as beings insignificant, that they may be profligate beings with a better grace; and (as they would flatter themselves) with more excuse. They run voluntarily into this error, as men run into the

dark, that they may sin without a blush; framing a lie (which is the common case) for their apology. Their master *Epicurus* meant much the same, by setting the gods at such a distance; and for their repose, exempting them from the trouble of inspecting the trifles of men. A due sense of the grandeur of man's nature, and destination, is his best bulwark against the frequent and violent assaults temptation makes on him. This is a subject which I wish had been taken into better hands. For, as it demands all the powers of the noblest pen to reach its heights; so the world stand in need of having this, above all other, pressed home on their hearts; for all other of any great moment are implied in it. There are but few, whose opinions do not too much widen the distance between an angel and a man. I shall bring them nearer together, as the best means for the reformation of *Centaurs* (as you shall see) and for the most noble exaltation of *men*.

I have just now observed, that—"angels want no-"thing but thy own concurrence to crown their "wishes for thy welfare."—This is true: Shall I not then be pardoned, if I presume to put the same meaning into somewhat an higher stile, and say (with all reverence) that heaven's desires are at thy mercy? —If so, think, and think again, What art thou? Thou poor, feeble, earth-born, mortal! What art thou?—Darts not on thee a stream of heavenly light? Dost thou not see an amazing majesty in man? Have

I not, then, made my bold promise good? Did I not above, tell thee, I would *surprize* thee with thyself.

Nor can I rest here. A man is almost more than man can conceive; a marvellous being that rises above himself, darting rays of glory beyond the reach of his own sight. My heart is tied to this endearing, transporting, and triumphant, theme.

Is *thy* consent necessary to finish what is begun, or rather, only designed, above? How strangely *this* sounds! Yet must I proceed in a still higher strain—In thee it is, (how seemingly bold, and impious so to speak?) Yes, it is in thee, to grant, or deny, the request of the Almighty.—And impious, indeed, it would be if authorized by Scripture, in which that request is made.

A requesting Omnipotence!—What can stun, and confound thy reason more? What more can ravish and exalt thy heart? It cannot but ravish and exalt; it cannot but gloriously disturb, and perplex thee, to take in all *that* thought suggests. Thou child of the dust! thou speck of misery and sin! How abject thy weakness! How great is thy power! Thou crawler on earth, and, possible (I was about to say) controuler of the skies!

Weigh, and weigh well, the wondrous *truths* I have in view: which cannot be weighed too much: which, the more they are weighed, amaze the more: which, to have supposed, before they were revealed, would have been as great madness; and to have pre-

sumed on, as great sin, as it is now madness and sin, *not* to believe. Such precious, and beautifying news is brought us by revelation; that revelation which is rejected, and despised, by those that affect to be thought wiser, and happier, than the rest of mankind.

The *truths*, I mean, are implied in what follows; *viz.* Heaven intends, desires, labours, works miracles, or more (if more can be), for thy welfare: it presses thee, it importunately presses thee, to comply. Consider; how art thou courted? And by whom? By Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; thy *fellow-labourers* for thy good. How is thy alliance sought? And at what price? Angels, inspecting, admiring angels, cannot compute its value. An extreme of love, an extreme of glory, this, which those angels (if angels could envy) might envy to man: for was it not denied to them?

Thou younger, but darling son of heaven! wonder; tremble; triumph!—Yes, triumph; tremble; wonder! thy greatest emotion falls short of the mighty cause. Thou greatly beloved, greatly favoured, greatly destined, and, oh! greatly endangered! take heed to thy steps: nor less take fire at thy prize.

Art thou more exalted, or terrified at what I say? Exaltation and fear both rise in extremes. With both passions comply; highly reverence thy *own* nature; more profoundly adore the *Divine*. Adore it with voice, heart, and life: and thus to glad all heaven, assert, rescue, ennoble, and with bliss eternal crown thyself: for without thee, in the constituted

order of things, heaven is unable to do it. Its almighty hand is, as it were, tied up by its own decree. Without thee, thou amazing being! (pardoned be the word so bold) there is impotence in heaven. Nor is it bold when explained; for impotence when voluntary, is no impeachment of power.

Is all this *rapturous?*—Yes, such a rapture, as nothing but gross ignorance, or more fatal infidelity, can forbear. Is not rapture due for felicities inexpressible? And what felicity is so much as second to this? It is the close, frequent, and feeling, inspection of these *interiora* of man's sublime condition, as *immortal*, and *redeem'd*, that is the highest cordial of human joy; and the richest mine of human thought. A mine deep dug by few! and yet without it, man is not more a stranger to the natives of *Saturn*, than to himself. Without it, he must want the true, genuine, vital, spirit of a Christian. None without it can be filled with the light and comfort of the Holy Ghost. This, O ye Methodists! gives the real new birth: this enters man in quite another world. In his *former* world all things are absolutely changed: well nigh annihilated as to his wonted passion for them.

The heavens declare the glory of the Lord, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work. But the christian *mine* I have mentioned, infinitely more demands our adoration and praise: infinitely more demands our exultation and joy. Are we transported, and justly transported, at the wonderful operations of nature, and decline we the contemplation of greater wonders

in ourselves? And when the former but amuses an hour, the last blesses an eternity? In those stupendous views it is, that the mercy of God, and glory of man, at highest shine. Hence it is, that constant joy is enjoined to Christians as an absolute duty: a duty, on weaker motives, as absolutely impracticable.

You see, sir, that to dive deep into man, is to dive into an ocean of Love Divine; which first drowns us in amazement, then lifts us into triumph: and at length, lands us (if we are wise) on eternal life. But too many swim only on the surface of our nature; like a feather, through their levity, incapable of sinking to those solid, and shining advantages, those pearls of great price; those great, awakening, and strongly stimulating motives to virtue, that lie below. But I shall resume *this subject* before I close. What is already said, is enough to produce that good effect which you will find in the marvellous scene, which, very soon, will open on you.

THE CENTAUR'S RESTORATION TO HUMANITY.

AT present, my friend! we must quit this consecrated, for enchanted, ground; as you will soon, to your surprize and disgust, perceive. I know it is not to your taste, nor, indeed, to my own. But *levity* has its use, when perverse patients will refuse what is salutary, if conveyed in any vehicle less agreeable to their vitiated taste; and the grave reader, who nauseates it, sacrifices (through too great delicacy) to mere appearances, the substance of what is right.

Thou knowest that our Centaurs can scarce be persuaded that they are not still human creatures; though *mœchantur, scortantur, adulterantur, diabolantur* (I am forced to make words that are bad enough for them); and not so much as retain.

—— *Veteris* vestigia *formæ.*——Ov.

Are they not (to speak with reverence in the language of the Prophet) as *fed horses in the morning?* do they not *assemble by troops in ladies houses?* It is *harlot* in the original; and so by us translated. But that is not their only objection to the Scriptures. Perhaps an old *Arabian* proverb may have greater authority with them. What says it? "Let him that would be safe, "avoid seven things; wasps, spiders, hyænas, croco- "diles, effs, adders, and *fine* women."

Here, then, I shall begin my exorcism. Its words must be strange and barbarous, suited to the occasion. Let not your ear, my friend, be shocked; but listen, and wait the event.

"MAY *Lais, Thais, Limax, Lupa, Succuba, Quadrantaria, Obolaria, Euriole, Sthenio, Medusa, Erinnys, Magæra, Tysiphone—May* all these, and all "*such* ladies, whether sick or sound, high or low, "of blood and title, or ditch and dunghill; natives, "foreign, or infernal—*May* this glorious group of "*Torrismond's* angels, these gorgons, furies, harpies, "leaches, syrens, centaur-making syrens! paid, or unpaid, keeping or kept, on fire, or quenched! ge-

" nevaed or citroned, in closet or cellar, in tavern, " bagnio, brothel, round-house, bridewell, or new- " gate.—Oh! *may* they cease from this hour, to sing " or dance, smile or frown, please or plague, pray or " swear, our British, unbritish youth, manhood, and " age, out of their senses, health, estates, reputation, " human nature, and hopes of heaven!

" And, these enchantresses laying aside their spells, " *may* the bewitched of *Great Britain* recover their " *pristine* form, as *Circe*'s herd, at the prayer of " *Ulysses*. At the touch of my disinchanting pen, " *may* they leap out of their hides for joy; and laying " hold on their long-deserted definition of man, *reason* " *and two legs*, walk uprightly for the future."

Rejoice with me, my friend! For do I dream? or didst thou not observe? Didst thou not hear?—*Intonuit lævum*. As the dark cloud which caused it is vanished, and a flood of light rushes in; so shall it fare with *them*. I see their dawning reason; I see the break of their moral day. And what I see, I shall relate; and what I relate, though strange, let no man disbelieve.

The Centaurs that can read, on perusal of *The Dignity of Man*, are stung, as the *Trojan* horse, when *Laocoon*'s spear pierced his side; and groan as deeply as that, when

Insonuere cavæ, gemitumque dedere cavernæ.——VIRG.

Most of them are much affected, but differently; being at last fully convinced that they are *not* men. One

burns his *Bolingbroke*; another an indecent song: this calls in his bills, pleading privilege no more: that bespeaks a pew against the next quarters: a third blames his delay; swears he will pray directly; falls on his knees, like *Cæsar*'s horse,—rises again, with a sigh, and solemn vow, that he will be master of his *Paternoster* before to-morrow: a fourth subscribes all his gains by false dice to the Foundling Hospital: a fifth orders two little boys to school immediately; and sends ten guineas to their mothers in bridewell: a sixth, in a flame of pious zeal, damns a senseless world; and undertakes, in less than a week, to demonstrate that adultery is a crime. A seventh, *&c.*

But I must not triumph too much. I have not had equal success with the female Centaurs. From a natural constancy of temper, and habitual aversion to change, they come but slowly into my wishes. But to make amends, when they come, they come with a vengeance, and overshoot the mark. Mr. *W—ly* (whose converts some of them are) tells them, that they stand not upright, unless they lean a little backward; like a crosier, or like themselves, when they coyly refuse a salute: thus, though converted, they find not the strait line, but stand still a little bent—to the wrong.

Besides, of my male-converts, I have somewhat to complain: for some, tho' changed at heart, yet awed by fashion, and vain of being still *fine men*, are ashamed to own it, and *appear* to be fools to save their credit. These hypocrites in vice, these moral fops,

ridiculously good, may be called *little* men in Centaurs skins; or coward virtue in masquerade.

And worst of all, of some Centaurs I am quite in despair. They fly my pen, and will not be *touched* for their distemper. But being deep stung by worse than the *Tarantula*, run mad for music, and dance themselves to death. Others, with *Swift* (in that respect a Centaur himself) look on the noble quadrupede as superior to the man. Others, on the contrary, approve, and heartily wish a *restoration* to humanity: but are careless, and indolent. They would, indeed, if a dæmon was not in possession, they *would* be good. But will not be at the trouble of bringing a writ of *ejectment*, tho' *Sophronius* proffers to draw it up for them. The lowest price of virtue is vigilance, and industry; and if it costs us no more, it comes very cheap.

As for those that are truly conscious of their calamity, and heartily desirous of an escape, mark the good effect of the least tendency to goodness; the mighty change, a restoration of the human figure is actually begun. But the process is gradual; nature advances, never leaps. They became not Centaurs all at once.

Nemo repente fuit turpissimus.——JUV.

As evil habits, which occasioned their transformation, were gradually contracted, it is no wonder, that their recovery should prove equally gradual, and slow. One sheds a mane, another drops a tail; and appears

only as too closely docked: some wonder to see slender fingers sprouting thro' hoofs by their penitential tears mollified into flesh: some, like dancing dogs, continue upright some time; but tired of that unnatural restraint, drop into Centaurs for life. So dangerous in moral distempers, as well as natural, is a relapse: some quite restored, yet still retain so much of their former nature, that they are apt to trip, if a strong temptation, like a stone, or cart-rut, lies across their way: some can scarce believe their good fortune, and fear it is a dream. Others, too sanguine, cry out, brother! to the first man they see; who starts at his new relation, with a hide still sticking at his heels.

What a loud call do I hear among them for things strange, and new! For dresses suited to the human shape; for pleasures suited to the human mind; for bibles, prayer-books, debt-books; for virtuous consorts, faithful friends, and fit objects of charity; for rational improvement and employments: no longer for Newmarket trappings; but for human ornaments: This, however, where the restoration is complete. Poor *Sudbury* is still aukwardly hopping on three legs; while others stand firmly planted on half four: one of whom, more learned than the rest, cries out:

Πλέον ἥμισυ παντὸς.——Hes.

The rest naturally take it for a pious thanksgiving, and give a loud Amen.

They that are quite recovered, arrayed in decent plain apparel, not dappled as the morning, with em-

broidery, or with lace all over listed like the beautiful *Indian* ass, call a council; and their first manly resolution is to proclaim peace with the *Lapithæ*, or men of virtue; with whom, from time immemorial, the Centaurs have been at war. *Chiron* bent his bow against them: but of war various has been the fortune between them; till within this last half-century, the Centaurs increasing both in numbers and boldness, wearing frontlets of brass on their foreheads, and *Horace*'s *Æs triplex* on their breasts; and having of late a mighty giant at their head, whose quills, more fatal than the porcupine's, threatened a thousand deaths at once, they began to dream of nothing less than victory complete. But the present reinforcement of their enemies will turn the scale against them. I say re-inforcement: for the next step my converts take, is to list into the *Lapithean* service, determined to meet their late friends in no friendly sort, under a banner with this motto,

Quid verum, atque decens, curo & rogo, & omnis in hoc sum.

Which promises victory: for they are very formidable foes, who have had the fortitude first to conquer themselves.

At the news of their revolt offended *Torrismond*, burning for revenge, cries, Ha, ha, snuffs the battle from afar,

Collectumque premens volvit sub naribus ignem.——VIR.

The glory of his nostrils is terrible. And still more abundantly his heroic choler rises on hearing that their

first destined enterprize is against *Bolingbroke*-castle; That delight of his eyes, and defiance of his foes: For he deems it impregnable; because it is moated round with *Acheron*, and its aspiring, proud battlements threaten heaven.

This castle was built out of the various ruins of many demolished forts of infidelity, pompously put together, faced over with a material more shining than solid; and cemented with untempered mortar. *Sophronius* * heads the laudable enterprize. The castle is taken as was antient *Babylon*. He first turns the general stream of the nation, by the force of strong and solid eloquence, into a new channel, as *Cyrus* did the river *Euphrates*; then entering the castle, and finding the garrison turning things sacred to profane use, and drowned in debauch; obtains a sudden and complete victory; but is a most merciful conqueror: For, instead of putting any to death, he only puts the most sensible of them out of countenance: And to their own darling delights, and boasted glories, instead of the gallies, condemns them for life. Obliging them, however, in acknowledgment of his clemency, to wear yellow cockades impressed with these words, "*Be thou a Centaur still!*" The bad man's choice includes his punishment.

The same *Sophronius*, adorned with his well-deserved mural crown, rescues the character of a late

* An excellent writer in this controversy, now in the press.

pious and learned prelate, which the Centaurs boasted *Achilles*, (who,

Jura negat sibi nata, nihil non arrogat,)——HOR.

had dragged, like *Hector*'s body, round the town in the dirt: For the glory of *Britain*, and for the light and emulation of posterity, I see it inscribed on a column of adamant; with a *Bolingbroke couchant* embossed on the base; who now contributes to support (as much as such a feeble *Atlas* can) that celestial character, which he lately laboured to destroy; proud of uncircumcised *reason*; which reason, notwithstanding had evidently lost its *authority* with himself: For when *that* is preserved, sense submits to reason; and when sense submits to reason, reason submits to the revealed word of God. And (since some are in love with words) I must observe, that reason stooped to revelation, is reason still; only reason more reasonable; and its great hazard of error is all that it has lost.

And now, my friend! what shall I say on this happy revolution? Shall I not out-boast *Augustus*? He said of *Rome*, *Latericeam inveni, marmoream reliqui.* I, of *London*, *Inveni equinam, reliqui humanam.*

Nothing remains but to cleanse the now-deserted *stables*, and to render them fit for human use; and to persuade the she-grooms, who kept them, into some more decent, and less diabolical, course of life; especially my patroness; who for the honour (as she calls it) of my Dedication, has promised to give into my superstition; and to play fair, at least on *Sundays*, and

learn her Catechism, when the *masquerades*, for the season, are over: Which, out of an unsurmountable regard for the first, and most amorous, and most musical, son, *Chiron*, she confesses ingenuously, she cannot forbear. For ladies love a Centaur still.

THE DIGNITY OF MAN RESUMED.

IT is high time, my friend! to quit this fairy land, of which, I know, you are heartily tired; and to perform my promise in resuming *The Dignity of Man;* a theme which my heart affects, and which your conduct, in some measure, inspires. And who can think of it, unimproved? He who *thinks* of his Dignity, necessarily thinks of his God: And he who *values* his Dignity, as necessarily worships and obeys Him. In a due sense, therefore, of human Dignity, our endangered virtue finds her most powerful guard.

Think you that I have carried the Dignity of Man too high? Spare the sacred page. "There, one of "*Adam*'s seed converses face to face with his Creator. "Another is called his friend. He who made the "worlds delights to be called the son of a third. He "who made the worlds even died for the meanest of "men. The meanest of men has it within his power "to be an heir of the most mighty God, and a joint-"heir with the most blessed Jesus." Absolves not this the boldest stroke of my pen? What can raise our self-estimation so high, what can aggrandize human nature so much as this?

In heaven's great and constant *effort* for our welfare, is capitally written the Dignity of Man. *That* is a key to the moral world, and opens, and explains the reason of all God's otherwise mysterious, conduct in it. Every step of which is evidently calculated for man's present, or future felicity; or both. The long-shining series, the golden chain of all God's marvellous acts, from the beginning to the close of time, speaks his uninterrupted regard for human nature; and what can more loudly proclaim human Dignity than this? O let it not be said, that Man's dignity is declared by all things, but the manners of man!

As distant as they may be thought by the thoughtless, heaven and earth are so near together, so shot (as it were) into one another, that good men are truly *foreigners on earth; have their conversation in heaven; are fellow-citizens with the saints*, and *of the houshold of God*. To speak allusively to the patriarchal vision, good men are angels; only, as yet, at the bottom of the ladder, and some angels are only men made perfect, at the top of it. As a man from an embryo, so differs an angel from a man; what one is, the other soon shall be. Since this is the case (and a most glorious case it is), and since by such multitudes it is either not considered, or not known,

O fortunati nimium, bona si sua norunt! ——— VIRG.

would be no needless memorandum, or improper motto, for all mankind.

But you still have your objection on the whole—— "Will not raising so high, and dwelling so long on "the Dignity of Man, occasion pride?" No; on the reverse, a due sense of it will necessitate humility. Pride springs from a conceit, which an individual has of his superiority over some others of the same species. The dignity I speak of is equally the Dignity of *all* men; and what levels, cannot exalt. It will *necessitate* humility; because without *that*, it cannot preserve itself: our native dignity will die in the result. As for that Dignity which occasions your objection, we have, I confess, too much of it. We have in abundance what may be called *lunar* great men. Men in themselves opaque, who borrow beams from their circumstances, or situation; which beams they shew, like the moon, by night: I mean, when ignorance prevails; then the darkened understandings of their admirers give them leave to shine.

The lunar grandees have generally many little surrounding sattellites, that help, by their adulations, to gild their opacity. But of such great men, who are forced to *assume* (as men must plunder, who would be gainers where nothing is due), it must be said, that the greatest of them would be greater still, if they would only please to be a little less.

They only have *solar*, or self-born, light, who live up to the Dignity of their nature. The light is not only their own, and illustrious; but inextinguishable, and eternal. These, as they are the greatest, are also the most humble, of mankind. For they well know, that

our grandeur is to be looked for in the love of God, not in the merit of man. And therefore they set it down as a maxim (and a maxim most true, and useful it is), "No man ever thought too highly of his nature, "or too meanly of himself."

Here would I cease. But how hard to get loose from this ever-teeming, all-important, and inexhaustible theme? It fills with serene joy the superior region of the soul; and denies entrance to the clouds and storms of worldly perturbation, and care. Such the height of its joy, that music, and wine, leave the raised hearts of our sons of delight, far, far, below. And yet how is this glorious subject in most minds, by the love of the world, close compressed, and folded up, as an oak in an acorn, or a man in the womb! To develope, and expand it, how great my desire! In which of its thousand shining lights shall I set it, for our final contemplation of its mighty moment to man?

Man is the most noble study of man. Let him circle the globe, let him traverse the skies; and then, for something more worthy his notice, and admiration, return to himself. To himself he is a theatre immense: And was reputed such, when that theatre had much less to exhibit, than, at present, it can boast; and when it was but faintly illuminated with the glimmering beams of far more feeble lights. The so-renowned *Know thyself*, was nothing but a precept enjoining a close inspection and survey of this theatre; yet that precept, as to its Author, was held divine; and as to its practice, the supreme wisdom of man. That pre-

cept is now exalted into an awful command from heaven; and that theatre is consecrated into a venerable temple; a temple of the Holy Spirit.

As in some pieces of perspective, by the pressure of the eye, so in this temple, by the pressure, or perseverance of thought, the magnificent prospect is opened, and aggrandized, still more and more; and opening discovers the full Dignity of Man. In what does that consist? In the marvellous things the Almighty has done, and designed, for him. And if so, this survey gives at once the greatest *virtue*, and the greatest *blessing*, of life. For who can see those marvellous things without an ardent *love of God*, which is the supreme virtue of man? And who can reflect on such indulgence past, without an *absolute trust* in *such* a friend for the future; which of man is the Supreme Blessing?

But this blessing, and this virtue, this glory, and comfort of life, is lost to those to whom this temple is shut. And it is shut to the careless and ignorant; to the slothful, and unawakened, in the most illustrious theory of the Christian religion. If therefore such men, in what has been advanced, shall find any thing like a key to this yet unopened temple; and shall enter its sacred, and surprising recesses, and read the wonders of Divine Love in it; that is, in themselves, in their own condition, and prospects; if they shall see, and contemplate, the three Persons of the Godhead, before creation, assuming, and through time's whole length, exercising, their separate parts, and provinces of Philanthropy; and shall behold an innumer-

able flight of angels for ever on the wing to receive their commands, and speed away, on various dispatches, for the temporal, and eternal welfare of man—How should I rejoice! For such a key would be next in value to the key of heaven. It opens the porch, the preliminary scene to it. Therefore have I kept it on the anvil so long! and yet how unfinished at last! May some master-hand accomplish, and multitudes open the yet absolutely unknown scene of their own nature, and blessed destination, with it.

And now, my friend, tell me, how must *his* love of glory fail; how must his *ambition* creep, who, after the strong inspiration of such a view as this, miserably confines it beneath the sun? Consider this view, and see how high human nature may soar; then look down on the Centaur, and see (if thou canst bear the sight) how low the sons of heaven may fall! Shall a being whose interests spread so wide as to take in both ends of the creation? shall a being deeply concerned in what was done in the days of *Adam*, and more deeply still, in what shall be done in the great day of consummation; shall such an expansive, and far-interested, being, with the most sordid, and despicable, self-denial, and the most inconceivably criminal *Poverty of Spirit*, imprison his stifled thought, and nail down his little heart to the narrow span of this present life! God forbid. If there is the least sense of Dignity, or fear of shame; the least spark of Man, alive, let us consider that we are not only the favourites, but the sons too, of heaven,

and obey, in this our voyage of human life, as *Æneas* in his from *Troy*, the *Delian* oracle,

Antiquam exquirite matrem.——VIRG.

But our overwhelming shame, and almost incurable misery, is, that we are so *carnalized* by our lusts, that our heavenly * mother, in our esteem, has no blessing for us; that a *spiritual* Paradise, is no Paradise; that it is a Paradise we wish lost; one from which we desire to fall; and to wallow, *Epicuri de grege porci* in our beloved mire. And yet what is this spot of earth which so swallows us up, and in its gulph of obscenities extinguishes our love of heaven? Its enchantment is very short. A few days, a few hours, may make us as wise as *Solomon*. For rest assured, earth's rankest idolater, who *now*, perhaps, in our flourishing school of infidelity thinks a wiser than *Solomon* is here, will, at the close of life, in his aching heart, ask *Solomon*'s pardon for not believing him before.

I believe that wise, and experienced prince, whose wisdom and experience was designed to spare future ages their own fatal experience in folly; and, closing with his *last* sentiment, the sum of his Divine Philosophy, affirm, that many a philosopher may justly be reputed a fool; that as there is but one God, one Trial, one great Tribunal, one Salvation; so there is but one Wisdom! that all which, devoid of *that*, as-

* Gal. iv. 26.

F. Wheatley del.t I. Mitan sculp.t

Resignation. part 2.d verse 23.d

UNIV. OF MICH.

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sumes the name, is but folly, of different colours, and degrees; gay, grave, wealthy, lettered, domestic, political, civil, military, recluse, ostentatious, humble, or triumphant; and is *so* called in the language of angels, in the sole-authentic, and unalterable style of *eternity*.

That awful word inspires; and awakens ideas that slept before; it points to heaven; and shews me where I fail.—Though studious to do it justice, I have wronged my theme. And wronged it much. Somewhat more is wanting to consummate, and crown the Dignity of Man. What have I advanced? "That "man is *near* to the blessed angels?" Is he not more? —Yes, most adorable Jesus! man is more; much more. O whither dost Thou call me? Whither dost Thou transport astonished human thought? I scarce dare look up to the summit of such stupendous love. Leave I not cherubim and seraphim below? Ye first-born of light! ye thrones! dominions! principalities! and pow'rs! What do I behold? How awed, and how raptured; with what prostration of heart, what elevation of joy, from this remote region, this lowest vale of the creation, this land of darkness, and shadow of death, look I up through incumbent clouds of misery and sin, and behold—a *Man* in heaven! In the highest heaven! In union with the Most High! In union with *your* most adored, and eternal King! And so throned in authority, to *you* so superior in power, as to make ceaseless intercession for the rest of mankind; not for *those* whose fall left seats empty in heaven: Oh aid me with *your* language, with words more

than human to praise Him! that Advocate unwearied for his relations (proud language!) for his earth-born relations, and friends, below.

Is not this *almost* too much for human modesty to mention? For human frailty to credit? For human corruption to admit?—But is it not also *far* too much for human gratitude to leave unproclaimed, unresounded, unadored? *I go to my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God.* What heart-subduing, thought-overwhelming, man-exalting, words are these? What an amazing, I had almost said *levelling*, condescension of the Deity! What an amazing, I had almost said what a *deifying*, sublimation of man!

O blessed revelation! that opens such wonders. O dreadful revelation! if it opens them in vain. And are there those with whom they go for nought? Strange men! in possession of a blessing, the bare hopes of which supported the spirits of the wise, for four thousand years, under all the calamites of life, and terrors of death; and know they not that it is in their hands? Or knowing, cast it away as of no value? A blessing, the very shadow of which made the body of the Patriarchal, and Jewish religion! A blessing, after which the whole earth panted, as the hart for the water-brooks! A blessing on which the heavenly host were sent to congratulate mankind; and sing the glad tidings into their transported hearts! A blessing, which was more than an equivalent for Paradise lost! And is this blessing declined, rejected, exploded, despised, ridiculed? O unhappy men!—The frailty of man is almost as incomprehensible as the mercies of God.

Who then can inculcate too much the Dignity of Man? For what equally to a due sense of it can inspire a contempt of the world, a fondness for which occasions the madness I deplore? Indeed a due sense of it, evidently, includes the whole of our duty. It inspires high veneration, and great gratitude, to God, who gave it; it inspires a reverence for ourselves, which is of utmost moment to our character and peace; and it inspires a proper regard for all mankind, as equal sharers in it: which regard would prevent infinite mischief; and banish half the miseries of life.

This, its universal use, its nature so pregnant of good effects, determined me to the choice of this too much neglected subject. And perhaps, I have now set it in the strongest light. But if not; its importance is such that it should be set in *all* lights, and from every point that imagination can suggest, and reason authorize, strike, if possible, the degenerate, deeply-sunk, and ever-groveling, human heart. He that looks not on man in the light above, or some light similar, and equivalent, knows not himself; is a perfect stranger at home; his heart wanders an exile from his destined felicity; he deprives himself of the powerful impulse which he so much wants, and which nature denies, and which revelation designed him, for his more vigorous advance in virtue here: and his more sublime ascent in glory hereafter: Which two are the whole of his happiness; all the rest is extrinsic, precarious, transient, and, inevitably, mortal.

And who will dare say, that he who declines, or falls from the noble, and elevating object of contemplation above-mentioned, and the glorious hopes it inspires, into the barren field of amusement, and trifle; or into the bestial abyss of a few years debauch, for his portion; who will dare affirm, that such a wretch differs not as much in reason, and happiness, from the true Christian, as a *quadruped* differs, in form from a man? It is not form, but manners, which make humanity. The mould in which we are cast, only says what we *should be;* nothing but our conduct tells us what *we are.* What wretches are they who contradict their figure; and accuse nature of having set a wrong stamp on their lying clay? The most despicable and deplorable being under heaven is a Pagan in a Christian land. He is like a rank growth of poison in Paradise. He confines that thought which should set out at the creation, and travel down with wonder and adoration, at every step, through the countless mercies and miracles of God for man, into nature's final dissolution; and thence launch for a never-ending voyage in a blessed Eternity,—to the nothing of threescore years; and the wretched means of annihilating that nothing, of contracting that span; lust exhausts, luxury overwhelms, and, by heaping on fuel, quite puts out the fire.

Where is that *Dignity* which reason exacts, and which revelation exalts, in man? In what I have said on that subject, I have, I think, done more to our purpose, than he who measures the heavens, and numbers

the stars. I have taken (as I conceive) the true measure of Man. That extensive measure rising above the skies, which the Centaur dwarfs down to the scanty span of the brute creation, to the *bestia triumphanti*; and making (might I so speak) a dunghill of our condition, with the cock in the fable, for a grain of sensuality, spurns the jewel away; the powers angelic, the radiant beams of the divinity, in the *real* Man.

But while I contemplate his grandeur (so mixt our nature, so great, and little, is Man), I feel his weakness: In mind, and body, I feel his infirmities.—Pain, this instant, stops my pen—Stops it short of what I had proposed to say.—It bids me take, while I may, my leave of him I love.—I take a solemn, because, perhaps, a final, leave. It is, at least, possible, we may meet no more. No more in this foreign land; in this gloomy apartment of the boundless universe of God.

O Thou! the last, and strongest hold that earth has on me! my friend in Jesus Christ! my rival in immortal hope! and my companion (I trust) for eternity! come to my bosom: Though so far remote, I take thee to my heart. Souls suffer no separation from obstruction of matter, or distance of place; oceans may roll between us, and climates interpose, in vain. The whole material creation is no bar to the winged mind. Farewell.—Through boundless ages, fare thou well. The Dignity of Man, and blessing of heaven, be with thee; The broad hand of the Almighty cover thee: May'st thou shine, when the sun

is quenched! May'st thou live, and triumph, when time expires!

This cordial duty done, this human debt discharged, my mind is eased, my spirits revive; my pain is less. And when this endless letter is ended, I shall drop thee for *the present;* and this idle pen, and an idler world (that other feather in the scale of eternity) *for ever.* He that drops the world, before that drops him, he *only* knows its real value; and the value of his own soul. And whatever the gaiety of the world pretends to, he *only* can have a solid, permanent, and uninterrupted joy of heart, who builds it on the rock; on hope of the Divine Mercy. Give a man the world, and give him no more; and his happiness is at an end: The human heart will necessarily feel a futurity, through all the superabundance earth can heap on it: Nothing can possibly give it a peace independent of an hereafter: That point of view in his creation, that purchase of blood in his redemption, and yet in human, conduct, that ever-neglected *All* of man.

Ask the last ill of mortality; ask pleasure's or ambition's triumph store triumphant, what is human life? Knowledge of the world recommends recess; knowledge of life reconciles to the grave. Few sufficiently consider how great mercy is implied in the grant of death. With a heart quite disengaged, its cable cut, imploring a smooth passage, and gentle gale, bound for that port whence none returns, I wait the mighty MASTER's call: That call irresistible, which every mo-

ment should expect; which every fool forgets; every knave dreads; every wise man welcomes; and every monarch obeys.

And yet, my friend, some of our few coævals close not altogether with this way of thinking; but rather seem to judge, that some little degree of precipitation may be laid to its charge. As the dial knows not the hour it points out; so they, by their infirmities and decays, discover their time of day to all, but themselves. Their desires grow stronger as enjoyments grow more coy. It is somewhat to be feared, that their hearts gravitate, almost as much as their scarce-animated clay; and take but few, and feeble flights above the level of the world; though very excellent things are spoken of thee, Thou welcome Haven of Eternal Rest! Thou delightful Region of inextinguishable Love! Thou great goal of Perfection! Thou bright Meridian of Glory! Thou boundless Ocean of *unrepenting Pleasure!* Thou City of God!

And is man invited to this fullness of fruition? And is man *importuned* to partake the glories of the Almighty?— He that weighs not well this transcendent height of Love Divine, is far from being able to comprehend the terrible depth of human guilt. And what guilt so deep as that of a *baptized* infidel? A rank heathen rising out of the sacred font, is *reason*'s greatest shock, the deepest wound of rectitude, the blackest brand of earth, the sigh of angels, a second spear in the side of the most Blessed Jesus, and the supreme triumph of the foe to God, and Man.

Most gracious God! in *happiness* and *dignity*, how widely distant is man from man? In both, what an immense superiority has the pious believer? Scarce seems of the same species the believing, and apostate, world. To the *first*, how justly may we cry out, O ye happy sons of the fallen *Adam!* where is the damage you received from your father's fall? Where are the once lamenting miseries of life; where are the once unsurmountable terrors of death, fled? I discern the Dignity of man, when his carcase is in the dust. I congratulate his happiness while the worm is feasting on him. Rejoice, O ye dead! exult and sing, ye dark inhabitants of the grave! For do I not behold, even in the grave, the comfort of heaven; when, with an eye of Christian faith, in heaven I behold a *Man?* The Man Christ Jesus? And with transport, and adoration let me resound the lofty language of the prophet,—*A man the fellow of the Almighty.**

THE CONCLUSION.

AND now, my friend! let us now consider how deplorably wretched is that man amongst us, who is deaf to *such* a voice, and blind to *such* a sight! And how criminally wretched is he, if he voluntarily declines them? If he voluntarily recals the suspended curse; obstinately presents disarmed death with his mortal sting again; and pours out, in his distraction,

* Zachar. c. xiii, 7.

all the phials of its original bitterness on the days, how dismal and unredeemed, of an apostate human life? What a formidable *revelation* does such a man bespeak in lieu of that which brought pardon and peace? What a revelation of no *glad tidings* awaits him, when his now-involving cloud breaks, and truth thunders on the dreadfully illumined soul, at the no-distant hour of death?

It is, indeed, in man's option, which of these *revelations* he will admit (one he must); but it is not in man's wisdom to make the least apology for a wrong option in so plain and important a point. A point how plain? I shall here just touch on a single proof of the truth of Christianity, which renders any further proof, among proofs innumerable, unnecessary with me, to create and support our Christian faith.

Every thing in the *natural* world is a proof of a God; and almost every thing in the *moral* world is a proof of a revelation. As, in the material universe, all exactly corresponds with the previous ideas of it in the Divine Mind; and in a substantial copy renders legible to man its invisible pattern, in the thought of the Almighty; so a complete history of mankind (if such could be had) would be little more than the same Almighty's *prophetic* word in Scripture, materialized into fact. The prophets are more accurate and authentic historians of the *future* than the most happy genius, uninspired, can possibly be of the *past*. And want we *miracles* for our conviction? The series of Scripture prophecies accomplished, is the most striking of

miracles: It is a miracle not expiring in a transient act! but of great longævity, persisting in a perpetual increasing weight and validity, through the protracted course of many thousand years. It is a living, growing, permanent, paramount, miracle, lighted up as a lamp of illumination for all ages; that all able to see, might be quite unable to disbelieve; quite unable to retain reason, and, at the same time, renounce belief. For if the Scripture prophecies are fulfilled, the Scripture is the word of God; and if the Scripture is the word of God, Christianity cannot be false. Shall we reject it as false, when, in the *present* fate of almost all nations, we are surrounded, and condemned, by a full ocular demonstration of its being true! Let us dispute our own existence, if we would continue of a piece with this.

Where is our natural curiosity? And that, in points which concern us most? Would we know what we *are;* or what we *may*, or *must* be to all eternity? Nothing but revelation can tell us either. So that if we acted on no higher motive than mere instinct, revelation would be precious in our sight. But vice extinguishes not our reason only, but our instinct too, when it would do us any good. Either the strongest instinct of curiosity is extinguished by it, or there is an astonishing, and pernicious self-denial in infidels, if their most natural curiosity is still alive. Revelation was written for our instruction; and are we too wise to be instructed by God himself? Throw we by unread, and as of no consequence, an unsealed letter sent to us from the Almighty?

In our infidels it is no less than defiance of common sense, no less than hardened impudence to the rational nature of man, to pretend, that, on due inquiry, they want proof of the truth of the Gospel. Its proof is not only great, but amazing; it is not only sufficient to convince, but astonish: Such its accumulated, overwhelming, evidence, so truly *marvellous its light*, that if rejected, it lays us under a necessity of rejecting reason, and revelation, together. And is not *reason obeyed*, the sole dignity, glory, grandeur, of gods and men? Nothing can so much degrade as the violation of reason; and no violation of reason is equal to a wrong option in this point supreme. Too faint is the strongest colouring of all the severe fables of antiquity, to reach an absurdity so absurd.

That of *Circe's* Sty, and *Chiron's* Stud, falls short of the mark. For reason, in those days, had not such powerful motives to combat, or such glaring lights to resist. And guilt blackens, in proportion to the strength of the lights resisted, and the motives overcome.

Since then (as has been proved) if reason makes a man, by ceasing to be Christians, they cease to be men; by what term shall we call those, whom no term can defame? Let, therefore, your offended sister pardon my *parable*; and let no honest man, for the future, so far offend propriety, and profane our language, as to join in one absurd word such repugnant ideas, as those of the Centaur and the man; *one* the

idea of a being, horridly rejoicing in the miserable, and mistaken, thought, that this short life, shortened by vice and vanity, is his All; and that, like the snuff of a candle, it shall go out for ever: rejoicing to think, that after all his bustle and ambion, he shall only by his *putrid carcase*, add rankness to a clod of earth, and defile the dirt: The *other* idea is that of a being big with humble, but triumphant, hope, of exalting with his *immortal spirit*, joy celestial; of adding melody to seraphic choirs, in ceaseless Hallelujahs to their Eternal King. "Sing praises, sing praises to our "God; sing praises, sing praises to our King. Praise "him, all ye angels! praise him, all his host! praise "him, sun and moon! praise him, all ye stars, and "light!" For a fairer light, a nobler star, a more illustrious sun is risen: the sun of righteousness with healing in his wings; and all the glories of unbounded creation are outshone by the smallest beam of the gospel; by the faintest hope of wrath appeased, and eternal life.

Yet this is that light, which some, in their superior wisdom, would extinguish as superfluous to man, and set up the dim taper of their reason in its stead:

> O *thou worst* guide, philosopher, and friend!
> Say, for thou know'st, what is it to be wise?
>
> Ess. on Man.

With equal *wisdom*, thou mightest imagine the sun superfluous, and unnecessary to the material world; and call on chaos for primæval darkness, as the great

blessing of mankind. Say, for, *now* indeed, thou knowest, is not *Lucifer* in the list of such benefactors as these?

Though in *this* his lordship is quite as good a friend to mankind, as he is a philosopher in his *materiality* of the soul; yet I will venture advancing towards that precious doctrine, so far, as to call, without scruple, such sort of imaginations the *thoughts of the body*; for from the body's predominance they, necessarily, rise: And that necessity proves the necessity of religion, which they resist: so that such men (which, perhaps, they are not aware of), while, as much as they can, they condemn religion, they commend it too; they as loudly call for it, as the disease for the cure. For religion is nothing, but an expedient for supporting, against the body's assaults and encroachments, the sacred interests of the soul.

At your request, Sir, in the wide-spread ruins of our *faith* and *virtue*, I have taken a slight view of a more melancholy scene, than could be presented by famine, pestilence, or the sword: but, by God's grace we shall repent; and not suffer our greatest glory to become our greatest dread; not suffer our prime and unspeakable blessing, *immortality*, to render existence the most insupportable curse. What a terrible inversion is this of the high favours of heaven! This must be the case, when man is all *sense:* For to sense nothing exists but the *present.* Our present is so dear, that our future is undone. Strange conduct! when our step *out* of life is so short, and so

sure, sudden, and innumerable our accidents *in* it, that almost every moment assures us, that unless in time we lay hold on our *invisible*, and, to reason alone, existing God, we shall soon fall from all we held so dear; and that then, not only all our happiness, but all our hope, is at an end.

What is there, O my countrymen! O my friend! O my poor, endangered, immortal soul! what is there, from *Adam* to this hour, but fully confirms what I say? The world allures us; the world condemns us; he who takes that kind advice, which thro' his own experience, the world conveys, will despise all its charms. As ignorance teems with infidelity, so knowledge is a fast friend of faith. If we would but know, what we cannot but know; if we would but believe our senses in what passes, and our common records in what has passed; it would not only reconcile us to, but, almost, supply the place of, our *Creed*; so very natural a growth is the Christian of the man.

As natural a growth of an infidel is a beast: a beast by God uncreated; by *Adam* unnamed. That defect *Adam's* meanest son has supplied, by writing CENTAUR in the horrid gap, which the bold infidel has made, by the desperate erasure of his christian name.

Is this thought too opprobrious, and a term of reproach?—I will make some amends by a short hint of advice, which may save from reproach the whole length of their lives, "Let not the brute any longer

" run away with the man, lest something more dread-
" ful should run away with the brute."

If this advice is refused, as *Alexander* said of the *Persian* effeminate army, *there are many enemies, but few soldiers*; so say I, of this *Paphian* isle, *there are a multitude of people, but a small remnant of men!* And of all brutes the most brutal is the volunteer in brutality; the brute self-made; the brute not from the decree, but abuse, of nature; the *strange* brute-affrighting brute, with the stature, vesture, voice, and face of man; the brute *mysterious*, irrationally rational, and (with horror let me speak it), *deplorably* immortal.

Does the *Centaur* still sound too harsh in their ears? I will so far indulge them, as to change it for *slave*; and instead of making free with their hides, only rattle their chains. For chains they wear, galling, infamous chains; Till stubborn and wild will is broken by grace, and reason, no man is free; but madly prefers the heavy burdens of his lust, and the scourges of conscience, to the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

And is it possible that *pride* should be the growth of slavery? They are proud of bondage, triumph in infamy, and imagine that in their high flights of folly, and riot unrestrained, there is something great. No man is great, till he sees that every thing in this world is little. And of all that is little, that *they* are the least. Would they know what is greatness? Great is he, and he alone, who makes the whole crea-

tion, and its amazing cause, the *circumference*, and his own *true* interest the *centre*, of his thoughts. Who has strength and steadiness, to weigh in perpetual and equal balance, right and wrong, body and soul, time and eternity, nature and God; and so weighing, to disdain any *very* anxious thought, for less than the greatest good his limited nature admits, and his all-powerful God has promised to bestow. That God, *whose are the pillars of the earth, and who has set the world upon them. Who in his wrath thunders out of heaven, and his adversaries are broken to pieces.*

In *this*, Sir, in giving our supreme good, our supreme effort and concern, in spite of all temptation, lies the greatness of man. Well may it lie in a prudence, *such* a prudence, as angels cannot exceed. If this is wanting, vain are all other pretensions to greatness, whether of king, hero, or philosopher. And a *Cæsar*, a *Marlborough*, a *Newton*, a *Bolingbroke*, a fiddler, tumbler, and scaramouch, may be thrown together into one promiscuous heap of equal impotence for attaining true greatness. The *performance*, indeed, of each of these candidates for glory, the multitude may admire; but the *performer*, at the same time, will be condemned by the wise, as little-minded and mean; nay, as a very *fool* in the language of Scripture; that is, in the judgment of God.

You see, therefore, to what titles of renown our *fine men*, on the strictest enquiry, may put in a just pretence; *fool! slave! centaur!*—The last is the

newest, and (which would be well for them) may be the least understood; but let them chuse which they please. Were it referred to me, their antichristian glory should be quite aggrandized, and shine, like his *holiness*, tripple-crowned with all three.

To that tremendous power, which *alone* is *truly* great, and good; in whose favour is all light, life, hope, peace, joy, and salvation; be thanks, praise, and dominion over the *rebel*, *fool*, *slave*, and *centaur*, in our hearts. And may our hearts, thus exercised, have a lively *feeling* of the God invisible; and, panting for the rivers of *true pleasure* at his right hand, abhor the *life in vogue;* and in *faith* unshaken, and *virtue* unfeigned, be confirmed for evermore; nor longer (to the reproach eternal of the present age) let our sins, as well as our situation, proclaim us to be

———*Toto divisos orbe Britannos.*———VIRG.

But to damp my rising hope, I know not if *another* distinction of *Britons* from the greatest part of mankind, may not have been the glorious indeed, but fatal cause of this most ignominious effect. It is the great glory of God to draw good out of evil. To draw evil out of good is the great infamy of man.

I suspect, that an insolent pride in *British* liberty, in some measure, inspires *British* licence of thought, and extravagance of opinion; which as extravagant a practice for ever follows: if so, vice, and infidelity, are as much our *national* distempers, as the scurvy, or the spleen. Though discretion much befriends hap-

piness, happiness is no friend to discretion. Great blessings intoxicate. Liberty, fraught with blessings as it is, when *unabused*, has, perhaps, been abused to our destruction. And as *British* malt, sublimated into the most pernicious liquor (now so much in use) so *British* liberty, carried into licentiousness, has poisoned and brutalised the *British* state. By too much exalting our spirits, it corrupts our manners; and that glory of our constitution is the disgrace of our lives. Purely to prove themselves *freemen*, some turn infidels: Hanging themselves would be as good, and, to the public, a less pernicious, proof. Such men should perform a long quarantine ere admitted to the embrace even of a brother. Heaven preserve thee, my friend, from the freedom, and wisdom, and happiness, now in vogue. He is most free who is bound by the laws; he is most wise who owns himself weak; he is most happy who abridges his *pleasures*; and he is most magnanimous, O ye bold, intrepid, heaven-defying, *Britons!* who fears his God.

He, indeed, is the most magnanimous, for by that fear he is fortified against all other. And he is *by far* the most happy! for the Divine Favour, the light of God's countenance is the *sun* of the human soul, whence all its vegetation of real felicity; and though the world, (which from him receives all its feeble rays) may greatly shine in our eyes, yet, as wisely may we expect vigorous and vivifying heat from the *moon*, as any *solid* satisfaction from it.

But just one word to the busy, ambitious, learned, and gay. Vice and virtue excepted, no man on earth can say, what is good or ill, in as great a tumult and uproar as your passions are, O ye *busy!* and *ambitious!* about every thing *else:* And to love, and labour at, what God commands, and to desire and hope, what he promises, is the single great lesson, O ye *learned!* and the single true pleasure, O ye *gay!* of human life.

And, now, my friend, farewell. I must trust myself no longer with the pen; for while I think there is a possibility, that, touched by some happy stroke, but one fellow mortal may be raised from a perishing *man of the earth*, to a blessed immortal, my busy mind perpetually suggests new hints, and my heart knows not how to refrain from pursuing them. The volume grows upon my hands, till its very bulk would defeat its end. New rays of thought dart in upon me, which, like cross lights, confound and perplex each other. Something of this you may have perceived already. Even Centaurs *have been* human, and I feel the strong tie of humanity, when going to bid them a last, an everlasting farewell. Like one about to leave unhappy friends in the midst of a destruction, which yet, by timely care, they might escape, still, at the moment of departure, some new caution occurs to me, some new exhortation, something unsaid, or not so well said, as it might have been. But now, the adieu must be final. With only this additional, and still more urgent, and to them surprising, motive for refor-

mation, *(viz.)* My assuring them, that what I have hitherto, through tenderness, allowed to pass for fable, is actually fact. That the Centaur is *indeed* not fabulous. That a man without religion is really a beast; and such is he pronounced in Scripture, where it is said that * *He also is flesh*: that is, a brute! And, (what should strike them not a little) this is assigned as the reason for sweeping away our degenerate race by the flood. A brute, in truth, he is, with this only difference, that his superior understanding gives him more venom than the most envenomed of serpents; and enables him to do more fatal mischief to himself, and others, than without the curse of reason, of abused reason, could possibly be done. So far therefore is it from satire, that kind admonition is all which the word Centaur implies. And as in some words there was once imagined to reside a magic power over *dæmons* themselves, that opinion might still prevail, if the design of these letters, to the wish of all honest men, could succeed, and the foul nature of the Centaur be cast out by the name. If this should be the fortunate event, these pages would live in the lives of those they shall reclaim. And if so, O *Bolingbroke!* and you, his applauding idolizers! what to *this* is that vain immortality which the meanest writers wish, and which the noblest can scarce attain? Praise is an error, where Pardon is indulgence; and pardon is indulgence to the

* Gen. vi.

brightest parts misapplied. They rather provoke, than please, the worthy mind, by laying it under the disagreeable necessity, and clashing dispositions, of admiring the writer, and disapproving the man. Which, in some sort, is like admiring *Nero* for his fiddle, when, through his own frenzy, his glorious capital was in flames.

I am, my dear friend,

Nov. 29, 1754. *Truly Yours.*

POSTSCRIPT.

I RECEIVED your objections, and thank you for them. I believe every judicious reader will make the same. All I can say, for mitigation of their censure, is, that they who take on them to read lectures in this laughing age, if they wish an audience but moderately large, must have weight enough to make impression on the serious; and levity enough to catch those wanton ears, which, unless tickled by that feather, would continue shut as close, as their silly hearts are to virtue, though an angel should take the chair.

I know you are so kindly concerned for your friend's reputation, that the mixture of levity with solemnity, in these letters makes you apprehensive of its exposing the writer to censure or ridicule. Yet, how is it possible to write on so dreadfully mixed a subject, as the ways of men, without being agitated by the most contradictory emotions? His follies so fantastically wrong, so ludicrously absurd: His capacities for virtue and happiness, so noble: His vices so shocking: Their consequence so deplorable!—So earnestly desirous I am of waking him from that dream, in which he nods upon the brink of eternal ruin, that if nothing can do it but my own disgrace, my own *buffoonery* (as perhaps he will think it), I rejoice to fall so low. If he will but laugh *with* me, at *himself*, he is freely welcome to laugh *at* me, as much as he sees cause. It is not his applause, but his welfare, that is sought. *Amendment* is the point in view. That point unproposed, (and

could the * Viscount propose it?) all censure is mere malice, and mere impertinence is all harangue: and entitles a *Tully*, a *Bolingbroke*, and a parrot, to just the same portion of our esteem, and applause. Would you, my friend, judge aright of men? Ask not *what* they have done, but *why*; or their characters will be still in the dark.—But I fear I am setting your judgment of men too right for my own interest; I must leave it under the power of some partiality, for the sake of your humble servant.

Pardon one word more. † *Centaur* is of *Greek* extraction, and signifies stimulation. May it here prove (as intended) a spur to virtue; and, most, in myself. Standing in awe of my own pen, may I take the counsel I give! Thus only can I be *sure* of doing any good; thus only can I boldly say, without the reader's leave, that I have not writ in vain. Is not this a new expedient for writing to some little purpose; and an expedient of no small service to the public, if all our writers would use the same? Their numbers, then, would be less a nuisance; and half the nation (blessed change!) would aim at virtue, as well as fame. This, too, might be some sort of apology for those heroes of the pen, who, dauntless at their own danger, with the spirit of a *Curtius*, for the sake of their dear country, leap headlong into the press, (too hasty patriots!) and perish there.

Vincit amor patriæ, laudumque immensa cupido.——VIRG.

* Lord Bolingbroke. † From Κεντεῖν, stimulare.

FINIS.